

The Magazine of the Connoisseur

The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



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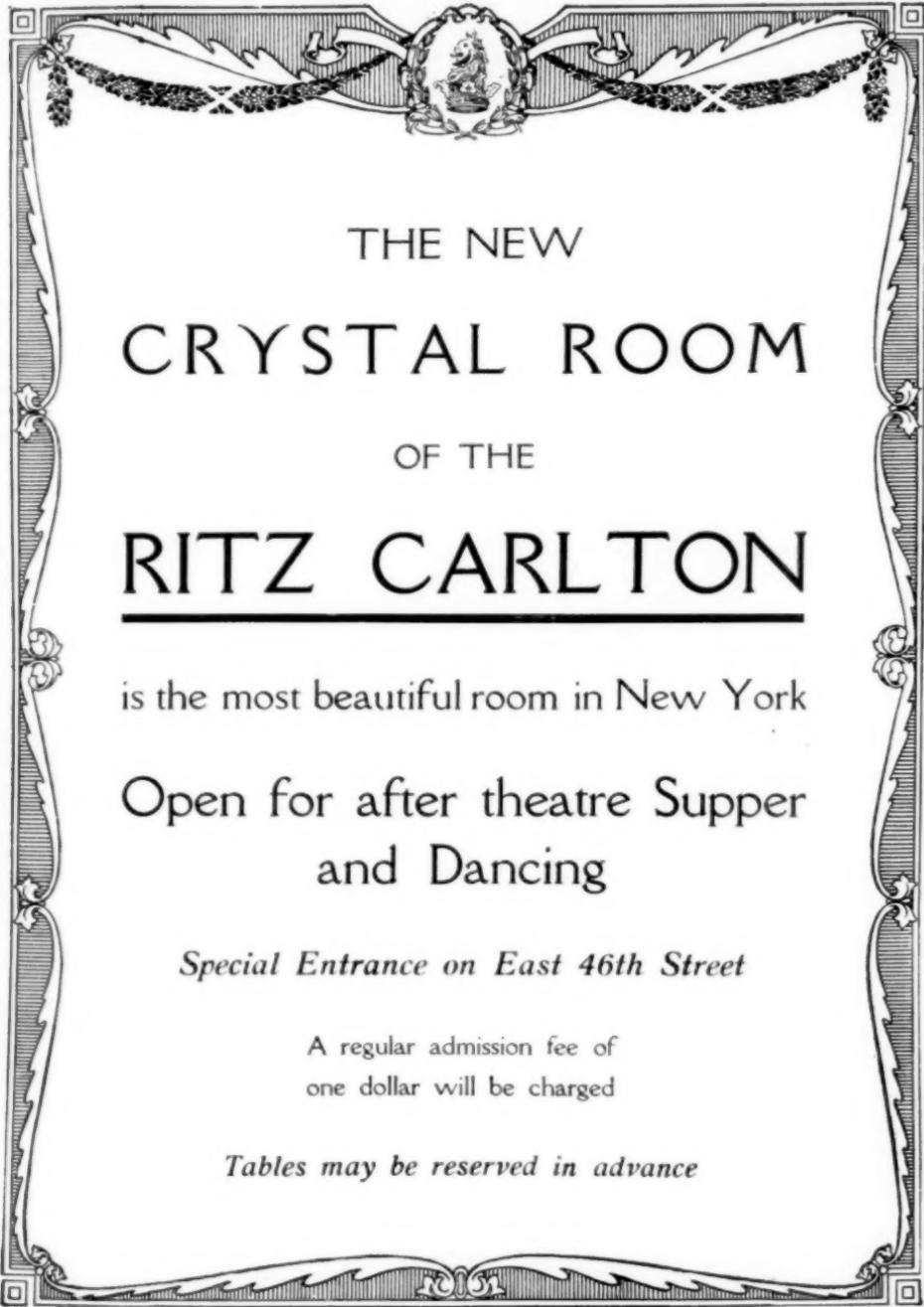
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FEBRUARY 1916



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THE SMART SET

Edited by
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and
H. L. MENCKEN

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*A Magazine of
Cleverness*

The Only American Magazine Read by Royalty

THE leading feature of the March number (on all newsstands February 11th) will be a complete short novel by Caroline Stinson Burne entitled

"HER EYES WERE BLUE"

A story of Paris and Long Island. A society comedy de luxe.

Among the other piquing features of this number will be:

I

An essay, "THE WORLD'S COSTLIEST LUXURY," by Patience Trask—a caustic treatise upon women.

II

"UNCOMMON CLAY," by A. deFord Pitney—a new view of an old theme

III

"READJUSTMENT," by Harry Kemp—a penetrating piece of fiction dealing with the moods and conflicts of a young married couple.

IV

"CAFÉ LA JOIE," by Frances Norville Chapman—a romantic tale of Paris, of the cafés by the Seine, of lovely women.

V

"THE PLOT SICKENS," by Howard P. Rockey—a satire of the current sensational fictions.

VI

"THE BACHELOR AND THE BUBBLE," by Hermann Hagedorn—a delightful study of the bachelor's attitude toward matrimony.

VII

Fifty excellent burlesques, poems, epigrams, short satires, etc.

VIII

Penetrating critiques upon the acted drama and the printed literature.



JAN 14 1916

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FEBRUARY, 1916

No 2

THE SMART SET

The Magazine of the Drawing-room.

EROTIK

By John Hanlon

THE stage was hung in black, the sombreness of which was relieved by a pure Grecian column which towered upwards on the right. From the fern-banked orchestra pit drifted incoherently the melodious whispering of the strings, the mellow moaning of the wind, and the irascible muttering of the tympani.

Suddenly the curtains parted and the dancer appeared, a slender, sinuous girl, whose exquisitely curved limbs were accentuated, rather than concealed, by the gauzy clouds of drapery that fell around them. She was the incarnation of some woodland spirit.

Her entrance crystallized the confusion of the instruments into a rush of breath-taking harmony. As she danced she seemed to be floating upon a shimmering, quivering sea of sound. Her most insignificant motion was a poem in itself.

Suddenly a wild cry burst from the lips, upon which, only a moment before, an enigmatical smile had been elusively hovering. Her expression became distorted, agonized, horrible. She clutched at one of her feet, and whirled around in circles, abandoning all sense of rhythm. The audience thrilled with amazement and admiration.

Two very realistic tears ploughed their way across the woman's cheeks, and she rushed from the stage amid a tremendous tempest of applause.

After the performance was over, the spectators wondered among themselves just what her interpretation had been intended to signify; but although they hazarded many suggestions, no one came near the truth of the matter.

The ballerina had stepped upon a tack.



REFLECTION

By William Sanford

I AM to be married next Thursday. I feel rather peculiar.

As long as I can remember I have always done exactly as I pleased. My income is large, I have gratified my every wish for physical and mental pleasure. I have met countless scores of women. Some have interested me, but most of them have bored me with their ceaseless prattle and flagrant willingness for matrimony.

The society weeklies quote me as young, wealthy, good looking, popular and a great catch. I am twenty-nine. I have not yet had all of the fling that my system craves, or my years demand.

I do not think that I really meant to become engaged. I had drunk some champagne during the evening, and my wits were playing little tricks with me. It happened at a dance. We were among palms and ferns with soft music in our ears. She was very near to me, and I could hear her breathing. The wine was humming in my head. I bent suddenly and asked her. She answered "yes," almost in the same breath, and leaned toward me. I drew her into my arms, and kissed her. She returned my kisses passionately.

My fiancée is a very beautiful girl. She is nineteen, petite, talented, and her people are quite wealthy. She has been mentioned as the season's most spectacular débutante.

I have been calling on my fiancée regularly ever since we became engaged. We motor, attend the opera and are beamed upon by her thousand and one female relatives who evidently imagine that I am supremely happy. I kiss her at coming and going, and at other times. She seems to expect it.

I have kissed many women that my fiancée has never known. I have held close to my heart many women she has never known. The sensation holds nothing of novelty or enthusiasm for me.

Ever since the wedding invitations have been delivered my fiancée's home has been a scene of wild excitement. She seems to think a wonderful event is about to happen. Hundreds of gifts, useless and otherwise, litter up the place. Decorators rush in and out. I hear of floral bowers and other gewgaws that are to be installed. My fiancée has told me enough about her bridesmaids to fill a book, and enough about her maid-of-honor to fill two books. I cannot remember any of it, save that they were in her class at some finishing school.

She is going to give them a supper very soon, and I am to give a bachelor dinner. I imagine it will be about the same as scores of other dinners that I have given. The only difference will be that I shall be the special object of attention instead of the little French dancer I have usually had at my stag affairs. I am afraid the little French dancer will be offended. I shall have to send her a cheque.

I have the promise of four of my friends to act as ushers and another as best man. My best man is married. He looks at me curiously as though his eyes were beholding a new and different being. I see an odd expression of wonderment, mingled with pity, in his face. It disturbs me.

I am twenty-nine, I have a large income. I have always done just as I pleased. I am to be married next Thursday. I feel rather peculiar.

THE COMPLEAT SINNER

By Hugh Kahler

THANKS to a delicate conscience inherited from remote Puritan forbears and the training imparted to the youth by more immediate ancestors, Page Hollister was able to know the subtle joys of wickedness far more frequently and with vastly less inconvenience than less fortunate young men.

To a man who has discovered that a consciousness of sin adds zest to nearly all human activities, quite aside from their intrinsic power to amuse, nothing is more useful than a Calvinistic conscience properly encouraged by pious influences in early life. It enables one to find adventitious entertainment in many diversions commonly regarded as tame. Reading the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, a process diverting in itself to youthful males of the species, was for Hollister a delightfully sinful undertaking, an excursion in immorality which utterly charmed him at the age of eight. His primary cigarette, his initial gulp of beer, his first, faint damn, all wicked enough to stir a pleasing excitement in the normally unregenerate boy, were breathlessly vicious delights to Page. The first occasion on which he played marbles for keeps thrilled him for weeks afterward, and when, at sixteen, he parted with sixty cents as the price of his introduction to the forbidden joys of penny-ante he walked on air and passed a sleepless night in a state of sublimated exaltation.

Page was twenty before the simple act of smoking lost its spice of wickedness; he disliked the taste of alcohol in any form, but its sinfulness lent a mental charm to a furtive drink which

more than atoned for the discomfort the liquid caused his palate. His hereditary instincts caused him to suffer acutely when losing money, but his convictions concerning the utterly unforgivable offense of gambling enabled him to endure the pain of parting with his substance at poker and bridge and left him a clear margin of abandoned enjoyment to boot. His providential discovery of the happiness obtainable in these simple pursuits enabled him to pass his late boyhood and his years at college in a continuous succession of delicious sins without inviting the attention of the authorities charged with his moral well-being, and established for him a reputation for blameless rectitude which annoyed him whenever he encountered it.

He early formed an admirably simple theory of life. Within him he possessed an unfailing source of inspiration, ever ready to suggest entertainment sufficiently reprehensible to amuse. He needed only to consult his conscience in order to find some mischief ready to his idle hands, the performance of which, though frequently unexciting in itself, yielded him acute thrills of conscious wickedness.

It was an endless delight to him to reflect that he passed his days in inexcusable idleness, bravely defying that inner voice which admonished him that in labor lay the only righteousness; because extravagance was indubitably a dire sin, he was at some pains to spend his substance more lavishly than his tastes required; the still, small voice which sternly pointed out that it was his sacred duty to marry, enabled him to extract a keen satisfaction from

his bachelor state. He was a very happy young man.

His inherited acuteness made him exceedingly aware of consequences. Not even the lightest of his fascinating sins was undertaken without a preliminary scrutiny of its possible effect upon his comfort. It was fortunate for him that his admirable conscience made him able to enjoy so many lapses from virtue which the world regarded as negligible, since his caution would have restrained from any undertaking, however alluringly forbidden, which might possibly involve him in unpleasant consequences. His chief source of pleasure consisting of doing that which he knew to be wrong. He would have been sadly unhappy had his ideas of rectitude coincided with those of the reprehensibly lax society in which his lines were cast.

He discovered at an early age the wisdom of confining his attentions to married women. Not only was this wholly vicious, but it was pleasingly safe. To play Lothario amid maidens was rather less exciting, and certain to involve even a canny sinner in all manner of complications. To feel a warming thrill of wrong-doing, it was only necessary to make pretty speeches to the women who were forbid by law to listen; it was not even essential to kiss them, though at times not unpleasant to add this deadly offense to the crime-sheet. With girls, on the other hand, one did not feel in the least that welcome conviction of sin unless the matter were carried to tiresome extremes, and the most innocent of honeyed speeches, the most blameless of caresses, might easily tangle a chap inextricably in the toils. From both points of view it was the part of wisdom to shun the coy virgin and the more interesting but still more perilous widow, and confine his sinful attentions to those who were mercifully unable to take advantage of incautious speech.

He chose the objects of his evil adoration, moreover, among those ladies who were obviously enamored of their husbands, instinct bidding him give a wide berth to wistful persons whose lutes

exhibited patent rifts. He clung pathetically to the belief that his course was the more insidiously satanic on this account; he found something thrillingly mephistophelian in making discreet love to a woman of whose fatuous adoration for her spouse there could be no shadow of doubt. It never dawned upon him that he was engaged in a work of purest mercy, that the recording angel invariably made a heavy credit entry upon his account when he revived romance in a heart prosaically devoted to its legal possessor. He never guessed that his ardent and antiseptic murmurs caused many a humdrum glow of wifely affection to flame into reminiscent passion, that the husbands whose unsuspecting friendship added a subtle charm to his intrigues were actually in his debt for mysterious intensifications of their domestic bliss. He was even secretly thrilled when one of these purblind benedicts betrayed uncomplimentary peace of mind in the knowledge that his wife was in Hollister's company. Poor dupes—he would reflect in the light of his superior understanding—if they only knew!

All of which, with the unimportant detail that he was past thirty, of pleasing exterior and address, possessed of a superabundance of well-invested funds and a member of that curious organization known as American society, should make the reader sufficiently acquainted with Page Hollister and clear the stage for little drama in which he plays a central, if not precisely heroic, role.

II.

It was Sunday, and Hollister had intended to devote his morning to a round of golf, not that he particularly enjoyed the mediocre game he played, but because his sensitive conscience persisted in finding a mild pleasure in adding another dent to the badly battered Fourth Commandment. He looked forward to this process with little enthusiasm, however, and gladly abandoned it in favor of the more exciting pastime suggested in the note which he found at

his plate when he came downstairs at the pleasantly reprehensible hour of nine thirty.

It was from Dolly Milliken. He was distinctly fond of Dolly, even after three years of assiduous devotion. She was pathetically in love with Buell Milliken, and therefore quite safe, and yet her innocent blue eyes and round, child-like face permitted Hollister to feel satisfyingly diabolical in laying siege to her pre-empted affections. She was pleasant to behold, moreover, in spite of an undeniable tendency to expand horizontally and the beginnings of a superfluous chin. Besides which she had a way of rebuking a daring speech in such fashion as to lead nicely up to the next one, to say nothing of occasional moments of weakness in which she exhibited a satisfying responsiveness, moments when her sympathy for the hopelessly adoring Hollister would carry her to the length of permitting him to hold her plump hand as she pitied him. Occasionally she had kissed him, when he was exceptionally melancholy, sisterly caresses which Hollister found mildly stimulating.

He would have willingly abandoned his designs on the sanctity of the Sabbath for the subtler sin of squiring Dolly Milliken to church vicé the irreligious Buell, and to discover from her hurried note that she desired to see him at once and alone, in the pleasantly improper solitude of Spouting Rock, stirred a lively anticipation in him as he absorbed his grape-fruit and omelette. He hummed a gay little air from an unsanctified musical comedy as he swung along the path which rambled among the granite giants of the shore toward the wave-beaten headland of the rendezvous. It was a pearl-blue morning; the surf tumbled pleasantly among the rocks and the smiling countenance of nature furnished an admirable background for the dark villainy on which he was bent. Where every prospect pleases it is delightfully appropriate that men should be suitably vile. And if Hollister's errand appear inadequately evil let the reader look to his own

moral furniture. It is evident that he does not possess Hollister's acuteness of conscience.

He turned a sharp bend in the path and beheld Dolly, seated on the rude, rustic bench, gazing steadily out upon the restless whitecaps of the bay. The voice of the surf concealed the sound of his step, and permitted him a moment of delay in which to prolong the forbidden ecstasies of the situation. A secret meeting, in Bohunquitt's most romantically secluded nook, with the wife of a wholly unsuspecting friend—here was evil in fascinatingly overflowing measure. And the faint, faraway tinkle of chimes from St. Simon's-By-The-Sea added savor to an adventure already almost Gallic by reminding him that he was intensifying its iniquity in absenting himself from divine service.

"Dolly!" He spoke her name, as the haroldbellwrighter has it, 'like a prayer.' Long since he had acquired the art of using insignificant words as the vehicles for unutterable emotions. He could say "good morning" in a tone which would bring a flush to the cheek of a good woman and agreeably quicken the pulse of one not quite so good. He used that tone now, and observed with satisfaction its instant effect on his companion in wrongdoing. She started, turned pleasingly pink, and extended both hands in an impulsive gesture which was half of welcome, half of appeal. He took them with precisely the improper fervor of pressure, while his eyes endeavored to look volumes into hers. Thrilling with a delicious conviction of sin he bent and kissed each of the plump palms. Usually this action brought upon him a satisfying rebuke, but now the fingers lay passively, submissively in his own. He kissed them again.

"It's come at last, Page!" Her tone was unfamiliar. He consulted her eyes once more and found them fastened upon him, a gaze which conveyed a faint hint of proprietorship. He had no guess at the nature of the tardy arrival, but he took his cue by instinct.

"At last!" he repeated subtly. "Tell me."

She stroked his hand caressingly. Once more he knew that agreeable thrill of culpability. His conscience yammered at him delightfully. There could be no question as to the wickedness of this!

"I've struggled against it as long as I could, Page, but it's no use. There's something stronger than a sense of duty that drives me on—on—on. I know it's wrong, but I don't care—I'm almost glad of it. I'm tired of resisting. As long as I thought that it would kill Buell to know, I fought it back. But now that I know he doesn't care, I—I've yielded, struck my colors and surrendered unconditionally to—to love, Page."

He was startled, but the word love rang in his ears with a pleasantly guilty sound. Whatever it all meant, he was being wicked than ever. It was exhilarating, uplifting.

"If Buell had been even careful enough of my feelings to conceal his absurd infatuation for Helen Sayre, I would have fought on to the very end," he heard her saying. "But he's fairly flaunted it in my face—here, where everybody knows everything that goes on. I can see the women beginning to pity me! It's too much—I won't bear it. I've thought it all out—I've written to my lawyers and made all my plans. I'm leaving this very day for Reno. And in six months, Page—think of it! After all these years!"

For a moment the idea of marriage woke a disagreeable sense of virtue in him. It sounded lamentably respectable, middle-class, stodgy. But close on its heels came the realization that there were circumstances in which even marriage could be spicily wrong. There was undeniably a piquancy about marrying a woman who had just divorced her husband with that illicit end in view. To be sure it was wholly legal and not uncommon, but his early training had equipped him with principles concerning the permanence of the marriage tie which infused into the prospect a sin-

fulness vastly more alluring than the relatively innocuous philanderings of the past. He kissed her hands again, passionately. What a Sunday!

"I've thought of you, too, Page," she was saying now. "I could see that the hopelessness of it was spoiling you—oh, you needn't think that love has blinded my eyes. I've watched your affair with Mrs. Weymouth from the beginning. It almost killed me to think that I was responsible for that! Of course, I knew you were no Saint Anthony. I could read enough in your inscrutable eyes to tell me that. But to see you trying to forget your misery in the company of such a woman as Mrs. Weymouth—I couldn't bear that, Page—I simply couldn't!"

This was glorious! No Saint Anthony! And that affair with Mrs. Weymouth! If Dolly, poor, simple-souled, unsuspecting Dolly, construed that relation as insidiously evil, what must the censorious, sophisticated world think of it?

"I think it was that which decided me," she mused. "It—it made you more attractive, somehow, to find that you could be—as bad as the rest."

Hollister was blissfully happy. Exalted by this gift from the unhallowed gods, he slipped an arm about Dolly's acquiescent shoulders and kissed her with an excellent imitation of passion. She closed her eyes and lay quietly in his embrace, a little tremor shaking her. He kissed her again, and again. It was a tremendous onslaught on defenseless proprieties. Never in his life had he felt so thoroughly abandoned. It charmed him.

With suitable pauses for more kisses they discussed Dolly's well-laid plans. In spite of the annoyances of a sojourn for six months in Nevada, she was firm in her resolution to speed the parting under the kindly statutes enacted by large-hearted gentlemen of the golden west. Eastern legislators having manifested a most unpleasant lack of chivalry in the matter of grounds and procedure, she was even eager to undergo the inconveniences of Reno for

the sake of greater ease, speed and certainty in the dissolution of the marriage which stood between them. He concurred, in the end, though he was reluctant to face the prospect of six months' separation, during which he would have no opportunity to repeat the delightfully sinful processes in which he was at present occupied. He compromised, at length, by agreeing to endure this deprivation on condition that he be permitted to escort her on her way as far as New York. There was something almost intoxicating in the idea of helping Buell Milliken's wife to depart forever from his roof—poor, purblind Buell, who fatuously believed that Hollister was his friend! He sighed happily as he realized the enormity of his conduct.

A comfortable conviction of sin upheld him when they parted and buoyed his spirits as he packed and lunched. His nerves tingled gloriously as he met Dolly on the station platform for the afternoon train and exchanged subtly significant glances with her. Buell, poor, chuckle-headed dupe, actually drove her down and kissed her fondly farewell. He even shook hands with the desperate villain who was disrupting his home and added a delicate savor to the jest by begging him to look after Dolly on the way down! What would he say when he received the letter she would write him from Reno? What would he say when, the decree signed, sealed and duly delivered, his ex-wife promptly married the trusted family friend! The irony of it sustained Hollister's spirits all the way down the coast, even when Dolly yielded to passing weakness and shed a number of genuine tears at the realization of the finality of her parting with the man she had once loved. He was so exalted by the spectacle of his wickedness that the discovery of the unpleasant effect of tears on Dolly's appearance was powerless to cast him down. And the distant prospect of matrimony failed, too, to dim his pleasure. Six months was a long time, and in any case, to marry Dolly Milliken would be suffi-

ciently sinful to atone for the essential respectability of the process.

They reached New York in the early morning, but the heat was already intense, and Dolly's mood proved slightly trying. He was entirely reconciled to her departure when he kissed her goodbye in the privacy of her compartment. Even kissing her, he discovered with a faint sense of alarm, did not seem quite as wicked as it should. He hoped nothing was wrong with his conscience. To blunt its edge would be a frightful catastrophe. It was just as well, after all, that Dolly was going. One might overdo even such stimulating misconduct as this.

III

HOLLISTER strolled northward along the shaded side of the Avenue, consulting his dependable inner mentor as to fresh mischief to which to turn his idle but wholly willing hand. So insidious is the effect of evil-doing that he already yearned for something which should aggravate the shocking behavior of which he stood joyously convicted. He knew that he was wicked and even now he was longing to be worse. For the moment his conscience had nothing to offer—it was too busy with reproaches for what had been done to devise any fresh offense to be vainly forbidden. Coincidence, the most valuable ally of the powers of darkness, stepped providentially into the breach. Katherine Weymouth, driving past in her motor, caught sight of the familiar figure and made haste to answer his vague aspirations by stopping and calling his name.

"Katherine!" It was instinctive to speak her name in that passionately reverential tone, to let his eyes tell her a number of lies in the rapt, ardent look in which they met hers. And the consciousness that their friendship had been so benevolently misconstrued, that even Dolly Milliken had given them the benefit of the doubt and taken their guilt for granted, added a thrilling touch of excitement to a meeting which would

have been pleasantly reprehensible in itself.

"It's strange that I should run upon you like this," she said soberly. "It's almost like a hint from Fate, Page. I was thinking of you when I saw you."

He climbed in beside her. "Nothing bad, I hope," he lied. He always hoped that women thought as badly as possible of him. She smiled a little sadly.

"Nothing good, I'm afraid, Page—though perhaps you'll feel differently about it. You've been at Bohunquitt, haven't you?"

"Came down last night. Why?"

"The Millikens are there, aren't they?" She surveyed him narrowly. It rejoiced his soul to feel his cheeks actually flushing. He nodded. Then inspiration came to him.

"Buell's there still," he amended. "Dolly came down last night. That's what brought me back—Buell wanted me to look out for her." He contrived to convey the innuendo in his tone. She pressed her lips together with a touch of grimness.

"Page, I can't bear it! I know it's my fault, but you mustn't! It's—it's not your style. I could manage to bear mere—mere *badness*, but an intrigue—a shabby, sordid affair with *that* dumpy, empty-pated little person—it's poor taste, Page. It is, really."

Again he tasted the sheer bliss of being unjustly suspected. That Dolly should misjudge his relations with Mrs. Weymouth was splendid, of course, but it could not compare with the tingling consciousness that Katherine similarly interpreted his attitude toward the other. He repressed a temptation to expand his chest. She paused for a moment, and went on.

"Of course, I understand," she said softly. "I know it's only the passionate rebellion against fate that drives you on. I realize perfectly that you turn to—to that sort of thing simply to forget for a little the bitterness of vain longing. But others may not—will not see the truth. I can't let you lower yourself, Page."

"Why should you care—or I, either?"

he said with an excellent imitation of recklessness. "When a man faces what I have to face, it isn't likely to make a saint of him."

She smiled affectionately at him. "If you were a saint, Page, I don't think I *should* care. It's only the men who are humanly bad that interest women like me. I believe it was the knowledge that you were—not so puritanical as I had imagined that decided me."

Decided! The word had a familiar sound. He turned to face her more directly. Her eyes were hidden now, but her rose-olive skin was wonderfully tinted with a faint, tender flush, and her lips curved in a smile which set his pulses throbbing.

"Decided you to do what?" he demanded breathlessly. She flashed a glance into his eyes which thrilled him through and through. Her gloved hand rested upon his wrist with a caressing touch that sent electric vibrations along his taut nerves.

"Wait—I can't tell you here. I'm at the Plaza. Come in, if you—if you think it will interest you to know." Her cool, throaty laugh echoed alluringly in his ears. He followed her into the hotel with his head whirling. In the sitting-room of her suite overlooking the green island of park, she faced him frankly.

"I suppose I should let you discover it for yourself, Page, but I find that I can't wait. All these faithful years of yours haven't been wasted, dear. I've tried to resist the temptation that made me long to love you, but I've given it up. It's wrong, I suppose. I can't make myself think that I have the right, but right or wrong, I can't help it."

Without conscious volition he found himself clasping her in his arms, kissing the lips which seemed so passive and yet so passionate. And his horrified conscience, dinning its frantic reproaches in his mental ear, filled him with an unutterable conviction of magically reprehensible delight. He had never dreamed that he could possibly achieve such wholly abandoned sinful-

ness as this. Dolly, speeding to his arms via the circuitous route of Reno and return, and, while she travelled—dreaming fondly of his devotion—Katherine Weymouth taking the shorter and vastly more wicked path to the goal! It was epic—nothing less. He felt himself a Lucifer, swooping through space to immeasurable depths. A random line of verse echoed in his memory: "For when the angels fall, they fall so far!" What angel could boast of such a fall as this?

She drew away from him at last, reluctantly, gently, releasing herself from his clasp as though it hurt her to break the spell.

"We mustn't do that—yet!" she whispered. "It will be hard—oh, Page dearest, so terribly hard to wait, but we shan't have to endure the waiting very long."

He did not understand, but some vague apprehension seized him as she spoke. He waited for her to go on.

"I brought my action on Saturday," she announced, after a pause. "The lawyers tell me that in three months I may have my decree—it won't be more than six at most!"

"You—you're divorcing Billy?" He was acutely conscious of his collar. It seemed to choke him suddenly.

"Of course! What a question, after—after my shameless confession! Heavens, Page—you're worse than I imagined!"

But not even this compliment diverted his attention from the stunning news.

"But—in New York!" he persisted. "How can you? Has Billy—"

Her face hardened. "Billy has behaved abominably," she said. "I would have forgiven him almost anything except his total want of consideration for me. He might have done as he pleased if he'd had the courtesy to avoid intruding his actions on my attention. As it is I'm not a bit sorry for him."

It was hard for Hollister to believe his ears. Billy Weymouth—steady-going, level-headed plodder, a hero of illicit romance even as he himself! The thing was incredible.

"He actually gave you grounds?"

"Not precisely that, but he's agreed to—in order to keep me from naming the woman in the case. He's highly chivalrous toward *her*, it seems. He's quite willing to arrange the matter with my lawyers and their detectives to shield *her*. I endured his idiotic infatuation for her as long as I could decently feign to ignore it, but when he took her for a midnight spin and brought her back at noon next day, I couldn't pretend any longer. We were with the Langhams, at Honkhonkoma, and, of course, the whole household buzzed with it. He had some absurd story about a broken crank-shaft and a kind-hearted farmer, of course. I meant to base my suit on that incident, but Billy agreed not to oppose it if I'd accept the alternative. So it's all arranged."

"Who—who was the girl?" A random recollection of some idle gossip came back to him to suggest a fantastic complication of the tangle into which he had stumbled.

"Why, Helen Sayre, of course! Surely you've heard of Billy's abject devotion to her? Isn't she at Bohunquitt? I thought I understood that she was due there at the Frasers'."

"Yes," said Hollister faintly. "I believe she's there."

"Let's forget about her," suggested Mrs. Weymouth abruptly. "I don't enjoy the thought. And there's so much that's pleasant for us to think of—*now*! Isn't it all too wonderful, Page? I can't realize yet that it's actually happening and not some wild, impossible dream."

"It does seem something like a dream," he admitted. So it was to Helen Sayre that he owed this second miracle of realized ambition, too? He was conscious of a distinct hostility toward her. It was all very well to be discreetly abandoned, as he was, for instance, but some people seemed never to know when to stop. Why couldn't that heedless Sayre girl confine her attentions to one man at a time? Her meddling might spoil an adventure which had promised to be positively entrancing.

"You may kiss me once more, Page," announced Katherine softly. "And then you must go away. We'd better avoid one another until the waiting is ended forever—seeing each other will only make it harder to bear."

Hollister kissed her obediently. And in the consciousness that he was again behaving most unworthily some measure of his satisfaction in the situation was restored. It dawned upon him that he was rather deeply in Miss Sayre's debt, after all. Not since he had read de Maupassant under cover of his hymn-book in the family pew had he felt a sense of guilt so delightfully stimulating as that which came to him with the responsive pressure of Katherine's lips.

IV

WHEN you have come to depend implicitly upon a certain source of counsel through the experience of years, when you have never once consulted that oracle in vain, it is disquieting to discover at last that your mentor is not infallible. It was almost with panic that Page Hollister realized that his conscience, which had never before exhibited the slightest doubt as to the nice distinction between that which was right and, therefore, to be sedulously shunned and that which was wrong and, therefore, certain to be amusing, was quite unable to inform him as to which of the alternatives before him involved the greater wrong-doing.

He was entirely sure, of course, that his whole position was satisfactorily blameworthy. On that score there was no room for argument. The still, small voice within was emphatic on the subject. But it refused to express a preference between the two objects of his guilty devotions. To marry either of them was admittedly unrighteous enough to satisfy even Hollister's growing appetite for iniquity. To marry one of them and continue his unlawful attentions to the other held out possibilities which charmed him. It is not to be understood that he regarded himself as in the slightest degree obligated

to make either Dolly or Katherine his wife—not for a moment did he entertain such a thought. The bare suspicion that duty was in any way involved in the matter would have been enough to decide him finally and inexorably against it. He was far too acutely aware of the great truth that the chief pleasure in life consists of first ascertaining precisely what one's duty may be and then carefully choosing the opposite course. To Hollister duty need but to whisper very low "Thou must" in order to make it perfectly certain that he would reply "I won't."

No. He was entirely free of the time-worn fallacy which requires a gentleman, under certain circumstances, to bestow his hand and name upon a lady, regardless of his inclinations otherwise or elsewhere. His conscience, in addition to three speeds forward, possessed a reverse by which anything which his unregenerate inclinations found desirable was *ipso facto* branded as immoral—a process of reasoning responsible for a number of interesting schools of theology. And both because he was distinctly conscious of a strong inclination to marry Katherine the moment she secured her freedom, and an equally fervent desire to follow precisely the same course with Dolly, and because his reason and his conscience both informed him that to marry either of them would be a deadly sin against the principles in which he was nurtured, his single problem centred upon the choice between them.

This was far from easy. If his conscience hinted that, inasmuch as Billy Weymouth had behaved more badly than Buell Milliken, and that therefore Katherine's divorce was slightly less damnable than Dolly's, this hint was offset by a certain preference for the dark, slender beauty of Mrs. Weymouth to the blonde plumpness of her rival. But his preference wavered from one to the other and back to the first again until he sometimes considered leaving the decision to the blind arbitrament of the tossed coin or the cut deck. There

was a certain attractive flavor of immoral gambling in this thought which led him to adopt it, but he discovered that it was impossible to abide by the decision when he had it. If the coin fell Dolly, he instantly wished that it had been Katherine; no sooner had he determined to appeal from the verdict than he discovered a lingering preference in favor of its candidate. Only the conviction that his very vacillation was in itself thoroughly depraved prevented the vexed question from robbing the situation of much of its tang. A well-trained conscience, as set forth at the beginning, is an exceedingly satisfying companion, once one has learned how to treat it.

He found New York unendurable, especially as Katherine shook off its dust the very day of their interview to take refuge with Marcia Langham at Honkhonkoma, and he was thus left without suitably forbidden society to distract his attention from the thermometer. He thought longingly of the cool surf of Bohunquitt and the pine-scented breath of the sea. After all, there was no reason why he should not go back. Even when Buell Milliken should learn the truth, there was nothing he could do. And Dolly would assuredly neglect to inform him of her post-marital plans lest she compromise the stern rectitude of her position. There would be something enjoyably subtle in meeting Milliken on the beach or the links and realizing that he never dreamed of the villainies which stained the hand he shook so carelessly. He decided on Bohunquitt and set about his packing forthwith. He was thus engaged when word was brought to him that Billy Weymouth had called to see him. This alarmed him, vaguely. Had Katherine told him? Or was it only another coincidence? One glance at Weymouth's face answered the question. He knew.

"Well, Page, old top, you win!" Billy clearly bore no malice toward his supplanter. He extended his hand in frank congratulation. "Thought I'd drop in and wish you luck. Kate's—

well, I don't have to sing her praises for you. I'm glad you're the one. Kate deserves a straight, steady chap like you."

Hollister's lips curled sardonically. Straight and steady, eh? If Weymouth only knew the abysmal depths of his depravity! He was vaguely disappointed in the interview. Billy wasn't playing his part.

"How did you find out?" he inquired.

It was too bad of Katherine to spread the news—especially to and through her errant spouse.

"Why, she told me, of course. But I'd have guessed, anyway, the way you've played around these last few years. It's all right. I deserve all that's coming to me. No hard feelings, eh, old top?"

"Of course not—on my part," said Hollister. Weymouth's eye rested on his bags.

"Going away, Page?"

"Yes—I'm off for Bohunquitt tonight." Hollister was conscious of a growing distaste for Weymouth's society. He glanced at his bedroom door. "I'm busy packing," he added. "I don't keep a man, you know."

"I'm off," said Weymouth rising. "May run into you up there, later. Been thinking of it. Well, happy days!"

"Bye," said Hollister absently.

Of course Weymouth was thinking of Bohunquitt! Helen Sayre was there. Evidently the fellow was simply dead to shame. Why, he acted as if he were actually glad to be quit of Katherine!

It confirmed his unfavorable opinion of his victim to encounter him on the train that evening. He turned in early to avoid listening to a recital of Katherine's virtues from one in a position to speak with authority on the subject. He began to wonder whether it might not be better to choose Dolly.

He endeavored to avoid Weymouth next morning, and took pains to discover which of the two hotels he had in view before announcing his own preference for the other. The sight of the surf on the gleaming beach restored

his spirits a little. He made haste to change into swimming garb and plunged into the welcome chill with a boyish exhilaration in the bracing shock to his nerves. He fought with the inrolling breakers for fifteen glorious minutes, and his vexation had all but vanished as he splashed back to the strip of sand, gay with its sun-shades and bright-hued bathing costumes.

"Oh, Page!"

He turned at the sound of his name, to discover Buell Milliken sprawled on the sand at the feet of a plain girl in a quiet, black swimming suit. He nodded and would have passed on, but Buell waved to him imperatively, and he obeyed, reluctantly.

"Miss Sayre wants to have the honor of your acquaintance, Page," drawled Milliken. "Helen, this is the famous Mr. Hollister you've heard about. He's going to marry my wife!"

The girl laughed in Hollister's blank face. It came upon him even in his surprise that he did not like her, that she was not good-looking, that her figure was poor, that her complexion was ruined by sunburn and freckles, and that her eyes were indicative of a malicious disposition.

"Are you really, Mr. Hollister?" she asked.

Hollister added a mental note that her voice was unmusical and her accent uncouth. What they found in her to be worth the price they paid for her society he could not guess.

"I imagine Mrs. Milliken is the person to consult on that point, Miss Sayre," he said, evenly enough. "At all events, I regret that I must decline to answer."

"That's just it!" she cried, quite unabashed. "Mrs. Milliken says you *are*, but—"

"I do not care to discuss the matter."

Hollister stiffened in his wet suit and the girl regarded him with frank approval.

"Of course not," her tone was still artless. "I only asked because you see, I'd heard that you were going to marry Mrs. Weymouth, too!"

"You are apparently well-posted," he managed to say. "But as I said before, the matter is not one which I can discuss."

He bowed and turned to go, but Milliken stopped him.

"I'm interested in this, Page," he said. "Of course Dolly's done with me, but I'm still responsible for her, in a way, and I want to know what you expect to do."

"That," said Hollister succinctly, "is none of your business!"

He returned Milliken's glare with interest for a moment and then resumed his way to the bath-pavillion slightly relieved in spirit. It did not lessen his dissatisfaction with the situation, however, to perceive Billy Weymouth, in beach undress, hastening toward the pair he had left staring after him. There were drawbacks, after all, to this business of being a villain. And clearly Bohunquitt, whatever its natural charms, was no place for this particular destroyer of marital content.

V

HE dressed hurriedly, intent upon getting out of this dangerous atmosphere before he should find himself a storm-centre in earnest. One platonically concerned husband was quite enough of a problem, without doubling the dangers and difficulties by facing two at once. As he emerged from the doorway, however, he saw that he was in for at least one unpleasant experiment in precisely that direction. Milliken and Weymouth confronted him uncompromisingly.

"Look here," began Milliken, "you've got to settle this thing right here and right now, Hollister. Weymouth and I aren't going to stand for any shilly-shallying. We've got a right to know your intentions and we're going to."

"This is hardly the place," said Hollister, as superciliously as he could contrive. But Weymouth interrupted him.

"It's as good as any—we can stroll off a bit and not a soul can hear us.

Come on. I'm going to get to the bottom of this."

He took one of Hollister's arms in apparently casual fashion, but there was a certain menace in the pressure of his fingers. Milliken grasped the other and between them they marched him along the beach to where Miss Sayre sat, tailor-wise, under her gay umbrella, like some oriental magistrate about to weigh evidence.

"I object to going into it before this girl," protested Hollister. "There's no reason why she should hear—"

"There's enough reason for us," declared Milliken. "She's in on it."

"I absolutely refuse—"

"You don't want to start a riot here on the beach, do you?" asked Weymouth suggestively. "Because if you do, you won't find much difficulty."

"This is absurdly primitive," said Hollister, "but if you insist, I don't mind. After all, it's more your affair than mine."

The girl surveyed them with interest as they came up. Hollister observed that she had removed her bathing-cap and that her hair was a shade of neutral brown which he particularly detested. They brought him before her very much after the fashion of a policeman haling a pickpocket into the presence of the law. She giggled.

"Has he made up his mind yet?" she asked.

"He's just about to," declared Weymouth. "Which is it, Hollister?"

"My dear man," exploded the persecuted sinner, "I haven't the faintest idea in the world. I was taken utterly by surprise in both instances. Nothing was further from my intentions than to—"

"Oh, come! You don't mean to say that after breaking up two happy little homes you didn't mean anything. Why, you've hung around my wife like a tame kitten for three years." Milliken snorted.

"And mine, too!" Weymouth followed suit. The girl giggled again.

"I think you're wrong about him," she announced, studying Hollister care-

fully. "He looks like a perfectly innocent, unoffending person to me. I don't believe he ever thought of breaking up anybody's home."

Hollister flamed with a sudden desire to vindicate his unsavory repute, come what might. He achieved a very creditably villainous laugh.

"Oh, I admit the charges, right enough," he said. "I deliberately smashed up your domestic bliss—for both of you. I'm fond of both ladies—terribly fond of them. But I'm blest if I know which I prefer. I've been trying to decide it for almost a week and I'm no nearer an answer than when I began. I'm willing to marry either one of them—I'm anxious to marry them both, in fact. Now, since you claim a voice in the matter, I'll just leave it to you. You settle it for me!"

The girl's face brightened instantly. "Why, he's perfectly splendid!" she cried. "I didn't know there were men like that outside of Shaw plays! How are we going to settle it?"

Hollister saw that he had cunningly sown dissension in the hostile camp. Weymouth and Milliken surveyed each other silently, their alliance abruptly ended.

"Katherine was first," said Weymouth, after an electric pause. "I don't see how you can get around that."

"Oh, I say, Weymouth! He skipped with Dolly before he had any idea that your wife had cut loose, too."

Hollister's drooping spirits revived as he glanced from one to the other. He felt once more like the hero of an Oscar Wilde play, waiting, a little bored but politely attentive, while two bereft husbands each urged him to marry his eloping spouse. It was a situation wholly to his taste; even the presence of the girl who had started the conflagration seemed admirably fitting, the final touch of modernity. He extracted his cigarette case and proffered it first to Weymouth and then to Milliken, and when each had brusquely refused, with an apologetic smile to Miss Sayre. His cup ran over when she coolly accepted the invitation. It seemed incredible

that it should be he who played this abandoned, impenitent, graceful scoundrel as if to the manner born and bred.

"We-ell," he drawled, as he exhaled his first satisfying puff, "there seems to be some difference of opinion. I repeat that my only aim is to please. My own preference would be to oblige you both, but under our present archaic laws and conventions that is unfortunately out of the question. I am even willing to marry them consecutively, if you will agree upon the order of precedence."

He laughed pleasantly. The girl studied him, her eyes dancing above her skilfully manipulated cigarette. The two rivals surveyed each other warily, as two cockerels nearing the call to arms.

"This isn't a joke, Hollister," said Weymouth. "You've robbed Katherine of her home and you've got to stand by her, that's all."

"And how about Dolly? What's to become of her?" Milliken's voice was almost plaintive. "After she's sacrificed herself on the altar of her devotion is she going to be left out in the cold? Not if I know it!"

Hollister consulted his watch.

"If I may venture a suggestion," he said, suavely, "this is all quite beside the point. It is obvious that I can't marry both ladies, and at present I am estopped by both law and custom from marrying either. I am given to understand that it will be three months at least before Mrs. Weymouth is technically free, and may well be six. It will be six before Mrs. Milliken is able to enter her suit. The question therefore does not press. You have ample time to arrive at a mutually agreeable decision before it is necessary or even possible to carry it into effect. I propose that we defer the discussion until we have considered the case on its merits more thoroughly. Good morning."

Both husbands stopped him. "No you don't!" said Milliken. "I want to know exactly where I stand, once for all. We'll settle it here!"

"How? Would you like to toss for

me?" Hollister was enjoying himself excruciatingly. He rejoiced that he had been forced to submit to an audience. It would have been a pity to waste this exquisitely decadent drama upon unappreciative waves and sand. And there was no doubt that Miss Sayre appreciated its every nuance. He thought he detected a dawning admiration in her glance when it met his own. Suddenly she clapped her hands ecstatically.

"I've thought of a splendid way to settle it," she cried. "Why not leave it on the knees of the gods? Let him promise to marry whichever one is first to get her decree! Isn't that fair?"

Hollister threw her an approving smile. Better and better! Not the most languidly immoral plot-builder living could have evolved a more apposite suggestion. The two husbands meditated intently. Milliken spoke first.

"It isn't fair at all," he objected. "Dolly can't even bring her action for six months and Mrs. Weymouth's suit is already filed. Weymouth's accepted service. He'd have a running start!"

"I don't like it either," said Weymouth. "My lawyers say there's no telling when we'll be through the courts. It's wildly improbable that the decree will be entered under six months, and it might be a year, or even more."

"There! You see it is fair, after all!" cried the girl. "When neither side is satisfied it's a sure sign the compromise is just. Besides, what else is there to do? Come, you'd better settle it now and be done with it. Think of the sporting flavor it puts into the thing! Why, it'll be the Vanderbilt Cup raised to the *n*th power. It'll make the suspense simply thrilling for every one of us."

The rival husbands exchanged doubtful glances. Hollister beamed on Miss Sayre. Decidedly, she improved upon acquaintance! Weymouth shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm willing," he announced. "It's as fair for one as the other."

"Oh, all right—I think Dolly's getting the worst of it, but I'll chance it," Milliken was resigned.

"Then you solemnly promise, Mr. Hollister, to marry the lady who is first to get her freedom?"

"I promise," vowed Hollister.

The utter depravity of the thing fascinated him. Of course he could always break the promise, if it suited him. Indeed, the idea had distinct possibilities in the way of aggravating his misbehavior yet more perversely.

"And you two solemnly promise to stand by and make him keep it?" the girl continued. The two men nodded grimly. Hollister did not like this development, but saw no remedy for it now. "Then it's beautifully settled. All we have to do is to sit tight and watch the race! It's going to be positively glorious! Mr. Hollister, I want to beg your pardon. I thought you were stodgily upright. I was wrong! I think you're the most thoroughly wicked person I ever met. Will you forgive me?"

"With pleasure," said Hollister. "It is a natural mistake. I fear my appearance is against me. And as long as you do me justice now, I am more than content."

He bowed, a courtly, polished, cynically immoral villain to his toes.

A happy inspiration came to him.

"And now that we've arranged our differences," he proposed coolly, "why not have luncheon together to seal the bargain?"

Without waiting for an answer he proffered his hand, which the girl gripped as she scrambled to her feet. She took his arm, and the two husbands falling in behind, they proceeded amicably along the beach to the pavilion. Hollister regretted that Owen Hatteras could not have witnessed this climax. He felt confident that even that dyspeptic satirist would have provided the applause which alone was wanting to make the triumph perfect.

IV

HOLLISTER stayed on at Bohunquitt. More, he blessed the chance which had brought him back to the refinement of

abandoned villainy which had made an already immoral situation almost sublime in its enormity. His conscience shrieked at the spectacle of his multiplied and manifolded sins until the knowledge of his depravity kept him in a state of almost continual exaltation.

Letters from Dolly, heroically enduring the discomforts of a Reno summer, with her attention rivetted to the growing procession of red-crossed dates on her calendar, quickly informed him that the loquacious Buell had sent her tidings of the nefarious compact. Gently, with a touch of chastened pride in his black past, Dolly chid him for permitting his entanglement with the designing Mrs. Weymouth to come to such a pass. Of course she understood how helpless a man was in the face of shameless feminine advances; of course she forgave him for the weakness which made him more lovably human, but he must be careful—very careful. He was not to fear, however—she would save him. Her attorneys advised her that she had done wisely to choose the definite certainties of Nevada to the more alluring whimsicality of New York. She would be free in time to make it impossible for "that woman" to annoy him with her brazen persistence.

Katherine Weymouth was more severe. She rebuked him with rather needless tartness, Hollister felt, for the stupidity which had involved him in such a snarl. Couldn't he see what he was letting himself in for? Why must the cleverest of men be clay in the hands of unscrupulous women? Of course he needn't worry—there was no possible chance that he would have to pay the penalty of his quixotic folly. Her attorneys scoffed at the idea that Reno could conceivably win. They promised her all expedition, and Billy was really behaving rather well. He seemed to understand exactly how she felt and manifested a commendable and self-effacing readiness to co-operate.

These letters Hollister answered religiously. They served to keep the savor of the situation keen, even as familiarity strove to dull its edge. The

duplicity with which he permitted each candidate for his hand to believe him wholly in sympathy with her cause thrilled him delightfully each time he read or wrote a new letter. He was thoroughly happy, at last. The uncertainty of the climax lent an added zest of its own. Quite aside from the blissful recognition of his perfect sinfulness, he was at once an onlooker and a participant in the most exciting game of chance, as well as the prize of victory.

The presence of the other actors in the drama helped to sustain his lively interest in it. Milliken and Weymouth, dogging the footsteps of Helen Sayre, provided him with unflagging amusement. It delighted him particularly that each of them made a confidant of him, assumed that he secretly yearned to follow in his respective trail, warned him against the wiles of the other.

"Of course I know you're crazy about Dolly," Milliken would tell him. "After knowing her as well as I have, I don't have to be told that. I'm with you, you know. I want Dolly to be happy, and there's nobody on earth I'd rather trust her to than you. But keep an eye on Weymouth—he'll slip a card from the bottom of the deck if he can. I don't like him enough to go to his funeral. He's a bad, bad hat!"

And Hollister would nod and smile his understanding and his thanks just as gracefully as he did when Weymouth whispered contradicting counsels and similar assurances in his listening ear. It was an unending joy to contemplate his quadruplicity. He would study himself in his mirror and marvel at the amount of evil which his innocuous countenance concealed.

With Helen Sayre he quickly arrived at terms of pleasant intimacy. She lingered with the complaisant Frasers while the summer waned, dividing her time impartially between Weymouth and Milliken and a number of lesser candidates for her favor—all of them married, Hollister observed. Owing to their assiduity he found it difficult to manage solitary interviews with her. It

was during one of these—a luckily unwitnessed escape from the Casino to the caressing moonlight of the Shore Walk—that he made an illuminating discovery concerning her. He had ventured a satiric comment on her preference for married men's attentions. She seemed surprised that he should fail to understand it.

"There's no fun in playing with bachelors," she explained. "It's too—too tiresomely permissible. They know it—I know it—there's no spice in it. It's about as exciting as eating corn-meal mush at Childs'! Either they want to marry me, which is so proper that it's painful, or they're just pretending to be sad young rakes. There's nothing in that to make it interesting—I'd rather play patience or knit!"

He recognized a kindred spirit calling to him, as deep to deep.

"Funny," he mused. "That's exactly how I feel about girls. I never could stir up any enthusiasm for them. I can't now. They're flat, tame. That's why I—" he checked himself on the verge of over-frank confession.

"Then I don't interest you?"

She asked the question impudently, as if daring him to deny her the trite compliment of an exception. He chuckled.

"Not a bit," he declared. "You're no better than the rest of them—which is to say, of course, that you're no worse. Not that your morals have anything to do with it, at that. It's a matter of code—mine tells me that there's absolutely no harm in talking to you, and that settles it, for me. There's no fun in it, either."

"If I didn't regard you as practically pre-empted, I'd feel exactly that way about you," she said, utterly unoffended. "I should think that you'd get a certain mild stimulation out of this sort of thing, for the same reason."

He stopped abruptly. After an instant he seized her hand and shook it cordially.

"It never occurred to me!" he confessed. "What a lot of fun I've been missing! It changes the whole case."

Why, I'm actually beginning to enjoy —*this!*"

She laughed. "I'll see if I can find some time for you, after this. You're far too wicked to waste on the simple-minded buds."

"Thanks," he said earnestly.

They walked a few paces in silence. Then a new idea struck him.

"But at this rate you'll never marry," he suggested. "Is that your intention or—"

Again her unmusical laugh rippled through the night.

"Oh, that's all arranged," she told him. "I'm following your admirable example. Getting married is such a tiresomely respectable business at its best that I've had to find a way of making it wrong enough to be worth doing. So I've promised Buell and Billy that I'll marry whichever of them loses his wife to you! Isn't that enough to take the curse away?"

Hollister gasped. Then, as the delicious enormity of it dawned upon him, he shook hands again. Clearly, this was a woman to cultivate. And her agreement, added to his own, imparted an adequate flavor of culpability to her society which more than balanced the lack of æsthetic harmony between her features, her colorless hair, her gray-greenish eyes, her unmelodious voice.

Forthwith he proceeded to frequent her company as assiduously as the most devoted of her wedded swains, a proceeding which seemed to alarm both Milliken and Weymouth as agreeably as it displeased them. He did not like Helen Sayre in the least; she neither entertained nor attracted him. But he found a keen pleasure in the infrequent occasions on which she permitted him to enjoy a monopoly of her forbidden society.

The summer ended. The migratory humans unfurled their wings and forsook the unfriendly shore for more congenial climate. But the four actors in this utterly unmoral drama were among the last to go. And they journeyed to New York on the self-same train.

VII

HOLLISTER met Katherine Weymouth twice during the brief time he lingered in the city. She was still with the Langhams in their all-the-year-round place on the island, and Marcia Langham was considerate enough to include Hollister in one of her house-parties, in spite of her acute disapproval of him and all his works and ways. He accepted the more willingly because he was thoroughly aware that Mrs. Langham regarded him as a reprobate beyond all redeeming, a brand which would not, could not be plucked from the burning. He was never quite so comfortable as in an atmosphere of disapproval on moral grounds. In the favoring glare of Marcia Langham's flatteringly ill opinion, he expanded, flowered into something akin to brilliance.

Katherine delighted him. Her beauty seemed intensified by the stress of emotions through which she had passed. She was at once seductive and aloof, Aphrodite and Diana disputed her, possessed her by turns. She eluded him not too sedulously, and yet with a sufficient persistence to keep him constantly reminded that their superficially harmless relations were, in essence, satisfactorily improper. And when she permitted him to be alone with her, she multiplied the charms of her reluctant caresses by sighing over their sinfulness. He was so fascinated by these several influences that he sincerely meant all that he said in agreement with her hope that New York would be more complaisant than Nevada. And the visit ended before its stolen sweets had begun to pall upon him.

He saw her again, in the city, just before he left for his wonted winter haven in North Carolina. Cautioned by her attorneys against prejudicing her case by even the appearance of indiscretion, she insisted upon meeting him furtively, in a queer little den of a restaurant in Tenth Street. She wore a heavy veil, and succeeded in infusing into their wholly innocuous

table-d'hôte an element of secrecy and impropriety which charmed him anew. He carried away with him to Cedarhurst a lively hope that fate would award her the doubtful prize of his legalized affections.

But again beyond the influence of her physical allure and the stimulus of her qualmy conscience, Dolly's letters revived his interest in her distance-enhanced charms. She wrote an undeniably insidious letter, Dolly did. She had an artless way of setting down the most innocent of phrases in such correlation that they were susceptible of deliciously horrific *double-entendre*, the appeal of which was magnified by the ever-present doubt as to whether she designed them to say what they did say or merely blundered unsuspectingly upon their happy sequences. A letter from Nevada yielded Hollister almost as liberal a measure of reprehensible enjoyment as an interview with Katherine Weymouth in her charming person.

And even so he discovered a yearning for yet deeper depths of iniquity. He made some cautious experiments to determine whether it was practicable to extract a measure of culpable pleasure from the society of the younger girls who splashed color on the dull green background of the links, gladdened the tennis-courts and the broad verandahs, galloped through the bridle-courses which wound among the pines. But, uninformed regarding his complete ineligibility, those who were sufficiently favored of mind and person to suit his exacting taste would have none of his society. And, spoiled by the experience of dual wrongdoing in the company of Helen Sayre, he found them sadly wanting in allure.

December passed slowly, in an involuntary and wholly distasteful rectitude, redeemed only by the excitement which deepened as Dolly's semester of waiting approached its end and Katherine's optimistic attorneys promised glad tidings at any moment. He realized that his career of crime drew near its climax, and sighed, another Alexander, for new

worlds to conquer. Only the increasing tensivity of the situation enabled him to play his daily round in outward content, and, as the race drew to its neck-and-neck finish his dusky caddie found cause to deplore an unwonted wildness in his drives and a lamentable inaccuracy in his approaches.

It was early in January that the word reached him. He came in from his afternoon round to find the fateful yellow envelope waiting for him at the desk. It is an unkind economy on the part of the telegraph companies which spares the merciful hint of the postmark. He fingered the message for a minute or two, wondering whose victory it would announce and already convinced that whichever of the contestants had won him, he would wish that it had been the other. He tore the cover at last, and the jumble of unpunctuated words swam before his vision in an unintelligible blur. Only the signature was eloquent. *Dolly!* He had been right. Of course he had preferred Katherine from the beginning! There was no comparison between them! What an ass he had been to consent to the idiotic arrangement!

Decree granted five minutes ago coming straight to you dearest love heavens I thought it would never come are you happy Dolly

He scowled fiercely at it. How exactly like Dolly to put all that gush into a telegram! He could hear her saying "Heavens!" He wouldn't do it! All the Millikens on earth shouldn't drive him into such folly. He'd simply ignore the whole crazy compact. He'd—"Tel'gram f'r Mist' Holl'ster Tel'gram f'r Mist' Holl—"

He signalled the page mechanically and took the second message from the salver without a thought as to its content. He had torn the cover and shaken the damp, folded sheet open before the possibility dawned on him that it might be—

At last free to come to you decree issued not five minutes ago already on my way Katherine

Five minutes! His first thought was that neither had delayed unduly in reaching a telegraph station. Then, as his senses cleared, he began to realize that a fresh complication had arisen. It might be Katherine after all! He studied the cryptogrammatic legend of the date-line, and his hope faded. Granting that both five-minute intervals were correctly estimated, Dolly's decree had been officially hers at eleven forty that morning, while Katherine's, by her own admission, had been issued at two five in the afternoon! He had lost her by a mere matter of minutes!

"Tel'gram f'r Mist' Hollister!" For the second time he heard the sing-song drone of the page. For the second time he produced a tip and accepted a damp, yellow envelope.

Congratulations arrive nine thirty Wednesday morning to see it through W. B. Weymouth

Hollister resented this indelicacy instantly, in spite of a certain satisfaction in the knowledge that Weymouth would be on hand to ease the tension of an overtight situation. It was bad taste on Billy's part to hint so plainly at an ungenerous suspicion of his probity. Couldn't the fellow trust a man's word? Why on earth must he take it upon himself to supervise matters of no concern to him? Well, considering Helen Sayre's insane promise, perhaps he might claim to be involved, but—

"Tel'gram f'r Mist' Hollister! Tel—" This was getting to be monotonous. The page grinned toothfully as he pocketed his third dime. Hollister was half prepared for the information which he found inside the wet cover, but his anger mounted, nevertheless, as he read it.

You win best thing on earth congratulations expect me Wednesday morning to arrange details with you to the finish Buell Milliken

Well, let 'em all come! So much the better—they could fight it out between them. As for him, he was done with it! They needn't think he'd submit to

coercion, mental, moral or corporal. They wouldn't find him waiting here for them to hold their inquest on him! He'd—he went to the desk.

"When can I get a train out of here?" he demanded. The affable young man behind the register smiled apologetically.

"South, at nine thirty-eight, to-morrow morning. North, eleven six."

"To-night?"

"Oh, no—we have only one train each way, you know. Eleven six a. m. to-morrow, Mr. Hollister. I hope it's not inconveniencing you to wait over—"

Hollister glared and turned away. He was caught. They'd arrive before he could escape. He'd have to face the music. The clerk called him timidly.

"A wire for you, Mr. Hollister!"

He took it calmly, resigned now to the very worst. It didn't matter much what misfortune descended on him in this latest message. Fate had already done her worst. He unfolded the flimsy sheet carelessly.

Don't understand both say they win arriving Wednesday to find out which is right Are you satisfied Helen Sayre

"Damn!" said Page Hollister. But the banned expletive seemed so entirely appropriate that it failed to provide him with even a mildly uplifting twinge of conscience.

For a moment he almost wished that he were virtuous! But then he was hardly responsible. Let us not think too harshly of him.

VIII

"You haven't a leg to stand on, Weymouth. Your decree was three hours late. What's the use of being a bad loser? It's an open-and-shut case!"

And Buell Milliken thrust his hands deep into his pockets with an air of absolute finality.

"You overlook a certain difference in time between New York and Reno," announced Billy Weymouth triumphantly. "Never thought of that, did you? Well, look it up, old son. It'll

show you that our decree was issued just thirty-five minutes ahead of yours! How do you like that?"

Milliken's hands came slowly out of his pockets. His eyes widened pathetically. Hollister was mildly interested. He had already made up his mind to do as he chose, regardless of the decision of blind fortune, but this turn of events stirred his flagging spirits in spite of himself. Katherine's glance rested admiringly on her late lord and master.

"You always were so clever, Billy—and so thoughtful," she said. "It's noble of you to stand by me in this, and I'm grateful."

Weymouth exchanged glances with Helen Sayre, who seemed happily oblivious to Mrs. Weymouth's rather too patent disapproval and then grinned modestly at his recently amputated spouse.

"I'm not going to see you done, Katherine," he announced stoutly. "You can depend on me to look out for you to the ultimate finish, divorce or no divorce."

"Thank you, Billy."

Katherine's lips trembled a little. After all, Billy had his good points. It was a pity—she caught sight of Helen and her momentary weakness vanished as swiftly as it had come.

"Then it's quite settled?" she asked, in an altered tone, turning instinctively toward Hollister.

"Not a bit of it!" Buell Milliken's voice vibrated with excitement. "That's exactly what it *isn't*! I'm not sure that Dolly wins, I admit, but I'm sure it's not decided—yet."

"How do you make that out? Three hours' difference in time—eleven forty in Reno corresponds to two forty in New York, and our decree was issued at two-five. Sounds definite enough to me." Weymouth nodded at Katherine.

"Yes—if you go by railroad time!" chortled Milliken triumphantly. "But that's only a working arrangement—arbitrarily fixed by dividing the country into sections—eastern, central, prairie and so on. What the clock happens to

say isn't the real time—anywhere. And before I quit on this I'm going to find out what the Government experts and the astronomers have to say about it. I'm going to Washington on the next train and when I come back we'll know where we really are!"

Before Weymouth could voice a protest, Hollister seized the chance for a reprieve.

"I think that's the only right way to go about it," he said. "This is a matter which concerns six people vitally. We ought to omit no precaution to decide it fairly. And as Mrs. Milliken is not here, there is all the more reason for safeguarding her interests zealously."

He was distinctly pleased with "zealously," so pleased, indeed, that a hideous suspicion stirred within him even as he swelled visibly with his conscious virtue. Was it possible that feeling virtuous could yield thrills, too? His carefully upbuilt philosophy trembled on its foundations. But the look of aggrieved surprise with which Katherine regarded him banished the doubt. He realized that he did not wish to marry her, and that his moment of rectitude was merely a hollow sham, designed to conceal his actual motives. Hence, it was entirely natural that it should have afforded him a certain satisfaction. It was very simple.

"Well, if it's to be decided in Washington, I'm going to be right there." Weymouth was shaken, but still valiant.

"And I," declared Katherine. "I'm not going to take any one's word for this. It's far too important."

"You'll have to hustle if you're going with me," said Milliken. "We've got twenty minutes to catch that train. You coming, Page?"

"No," decided Hollister. "I—I find this quibbling distasteful. I will abide by what you three find out. Perhaps, by the time you have your answer, Mrs. Milliken will have arrived and we can settle in the presence of all concerned."

"Just as you like. Where's Helen?"

But Miss Sayre had evidently decided again the journey, too. At all

events a hasty search for her in the lobby and corridors proved fruitless, and the approach of train-time forced the three seekers after truth to depart on their quest without her. Hollister drew a long breath as he watched their motor whirl about the corner of the drive. He turned away to find Helen Sayre inspecting him in frank amusement.

"I say," he began impulsively, "which side are you on?"

She laughed. "Oh, I'm neutral—I don't care which of them comes in for the shock I'm saving up."

"You're going to back down?" He studied her intently. "Why? Are you thinking of the sawdust-trail, by any chance?"

"Not that!" she laughed again, and he noticed once more how thoroughly unmusical the sound was. "Just the opposite. It seems as if I actually ought to go through with it—that's what's troubling me. As long as I was sure I ought not to, I distinctly liked the idea. But—I never enjoyed doing anything I knew I ought to do, and it doesn't seem to me as if I'd enjoy this."

"Precisely my sentiments! Except that I'm *positive* I shouldn't like it. Why, it seems actually virtuous! I can fairly taste the righteousness on my lips as I fulfil my solemn obligations. Ugh! But I'm worse off than you—they can't very well use force on you, and it rather sticks in mind that both those interesting suitors of yours will do just exactly that if I don't toe the mark."

"You aren't afraid, surely?" She inspected him curiously.

"I have succeeded in ridding myself of all the virtues," he boasted, "including that of courage. I get a frightful amount of satisfaction out of the knowledge that I'm an abject coward. And I shudder at the thought of what would happen to my bad resolutions should your two friends appeal to *force majeure*."

"The question before the house seems to be to discover something which is wicked enough to be pleasant and

virtuous enough to be safe," she mused. "Let's think!"

IX

It was two days later that they watched the travellers return. The western train had brought the one missing member of the party to the Junction in time to deposit her on the same local by which the other three journeyed back from Washington, and in the two-hour interval before they reached Cedarhurst, a division had clearly taken place. So much was visible at a glance as the quartette walked across the wide lobby to the desk. Weymouth led the way, escorting Katherine. Four or five paces behind them Milliken watched over the disposition of Dolly's luggage, under her active supervision.

"None of them seems exactly overjoyed," remarked Helen, as she studied the four faces.

"They do look—virtuous," agreed Hollister. "Well, whatever it is, I suppose we'd better get it over with. Heavens above! Nevada certainly agreed with Dolly! She's—she's almost imposing."

"'Tis absence makes her form look rounder," laughed Helen. "She's lost a good fifteen pounds since I saw her last. Your standards of beauty have shrunk, evidently."

"It's possible. Let's hear the verdict and learn the worst. This suspense is killing."

"Page!"

Dolly removed a vast weight from Hollister's mind by the manner of her greeting. He had anticipated an enthusiastic, effervescent fervor of demonstration, and he breathed more easily when she contented herself with a brief pressure of his fingers and a long, grieved look into his eyes. He interpreted this restraint as indicating the triumph of the divided Weymouths over the sundered house of Milliken.

Of two ills, the lesser is proverbially preferable. The saw has an application in *avoirduois* as well as in rule-of-

thumb philosophy. Hollister's swift side-glance of comparison informed him beyond doubt that of the two ills in his path, Katherine was the lesser in both respects. But the late Mrs. Weymouth was as singularly devoid of enthusiasm as her defeated rival. She acknowledged his greeting with a subdued melancholy which puzzled him.

"I've reserved a private sitting-room," he announced. "Suppose we hold this conclave there."

He led the way between his alternative destinies. Behind them the two ex-husbands formed a guard of honor for the girl. They instinctively grouped themselves about the table in the private room after this same fashion, Hollister at one end, facing Miss Sayre, with Dolly and Buell at his right and Katherine and Billy opposite them.

"Well," said Hollister cheerfully, "what is the decision of the wise men? I am in some suspense."

"We're right where we were before," said Milliken.

"Worse!" Katherine amended.

"Of all detestable luck!" snapped Dolly.

"It's all off," finished Weymouth.

"Interesting but obscure." Hollister elevated his brows languidly. "I am still in suspense. Just what did you find out at Washington?"

"Why," said Buell gloomily, after a pause, "we've found out, after taking the case right up to the highest authorities and getting the exact time as nearly as each court-clerk can give it, that those two divorces were officially granted at exactly the same second. Nice, isn't it?"

"It complicates matters," said Hollister calmly. "But we can settle the question simply enough by drawing lots or tossing a coin—the usual method, I believe, when sporting contests result in a draw." He glanced about him. "I am willing to submit the question to the judgment of chance, if that is satisfactory to the rest of you."

"It is decidedly *not* satisfactory to me!" declared Mrs. Weymouth quickly.

"I decline to gamble for a husband, absolutely."

"Of course!" seconded Dolly. "It's—coarse of you to suggest such a thing, Page. I shouldn't think of it."

"I am open to suggestions, then," said Hollister. "Anything which recommends itself to you—"

"Let's have an end of this unworthy folly, then!" Katherine Weymouth flushed with indignation. "We've trifled enough with a sacred matter. Page, you are the only one who can possibly decide. I consent to leave it to you—choose which of us means most to you."

Her eyes met his with a proud confidence. He glanced at Dolly Milliken, to meet the same expression in hers.

"That's fair," said Weymouth, secure in the belief that Hollister vastly preferred the all-but-peerless Katherine.

"Suits me," agreed Milliken, sustained by a similar conviction.

Hollister hesitated. "Miss Sayre?"

"I fail to see how this matter concerns Miss—Miss Sayre?" Mrs. Weymouth's tone was silkily offensive. "I am at a loss to understand why she should be present."

"That's precisely what I'd like to know!" Dolly Milliken was more outspoken. Hollister brightened. A gleam of satisfaction glinted in his eyes.

"Miss Sayre is concerned in exactly the same fashion and degree that I am," he said smoothly. Both ladies stared blankly. "She has undertaken to marry the man whose former wife shall marry me," he added, while the two culprits shrank visibly in their seats and their late helpmeets surveyed them with mingled reproach and reproof. Hollister was almost happy in the sight.

"Billy—you didn't—you wouldn't?" Katherine's voice was tragic.

"Well, why not?" demanded the aggrieved Weymouth defiantly. "You were in a precious hurry to divorce me so that you could marry Page, weren't you? Jumped at a flimsy excuse—a little harmless flirtation—I say, Katherine, after the way I've looked after your interests all through this muddle,

after I've done my level best to help you get the man you want, it doesn't sound very well for you to complain about my doing something for myself!"

Milliken did not wait for the attack. He leaped on the offensive himself before his wife could speak. "That applies to you, too, Dolly—every bit of it. It's no use looking at me as if I'd been caught picking pockets. I've got a clear conscience all the way through."

"I didn't mean it, Billy," Katherine was penitent. "You've been a perfect brick to stand up for me the way you have." (It did not occur to her at the moment that Billy had had more than one motive for seeking to establish her claim upon Hollister, but she realized it quite clearly—later.) I know I have no right to object, but, oh, Billy, please don't!"

"Well, how about you?" said her husband, slightly mollified. "Would you give up Hollister if I said: 'Oh, Katherine, please don't'?"

She hesitated.

"You haven't said it," she temporized. "And it may not be necessary for me to give up Page—he hasn't decided yet."

Hollister intervened quickly.

"I am ready to decide, if Miss Sayre is willing," he said. "This is all beside the point. Miss Sayre—?"

The girl nodded. "I'm quite willing to leave it in your hands, Mr. Hollister," she said quietly.

"Thank you. And now—" he paused, while each of the others instinctively leaned toward him, tense, expectant. "I am sorry to confess that the choice is not a matter of preference between two wholly charming women," he proceeded slowly. "I have tried again and again to determine which of you is dearer, more to be desired, and I cannot. I love each of you precisely as much as I love the other—no more and no less."

"Oh!"

Katherine flashed at Dolly the inscrutable look with which the best and

worst of women invariably inspect the object of a man's pathetically blind affection.

"Oh!"

Dolly examined Katherine in precisely the same fashion.

Both ladies favored Hollister with a disdainful glance and each of them moved perceptibly closer to her ex-husband. Hollister repressed a tendency to grin. It was like the mechanically identical manœuvres of well-drilled troops.

"But there is another way of arriving at a decision. It is an invention of my own. We will agree that there is an element of right and wrong, a question of honor or dishonor, involved in this problem. Nice distinctions such as must decide this case are difficult to draw when one considers only right, only honor, only duty. But by approaching the matter from the opposite direction, it is often easy to reach a conclusion.

"As we cannot determine which is the most righteous and honorable course for me to follow, suppose we reverse the process and look for the worst possible behavior of which I could be guilty. For instance, I might marry you both. That is ruled out at once as impracticable, though admirable, except for that defect."

"You might marry neither of us," suggested Dolly Milliken, a little acidly. She was unwontedly thoughtful. Hollister smiled.

"Excellent! Prove faithless to you both—a double default. But there must be something still more iniquitous and yet within the law. Think!"

"You might marry some other woman," hazarded Milliken, interested in the speculation.

"Splendid! And if one woman would be worse than another?"

"I might suggest Miss Sayre!" said Mrs. Weymouth. "It would be an almost perfect structure of iniquity if, after proving false to us both, you were to marry the woman who was responsible for our listening to your amiable fictions."

Hollister beamed and rubbed his hands together.

"This is magnificent—considering your inexperience!" he cried. "You have come within one step of the maximum. I myself, with a lifetime of training, can improve on your suggestions only a little. Can you think of anything worse than Mrs. Weymouth's idea? Come—try again!"

There was a long pause before Dolly Milliken was inspired. "You might have been married to her from the first!" she ventured. Hollister rose abruptly to his feet.

"It will be the regret of my life that I did not think of that, Mrs. Milliken. But I was not far from it. In pursuance of my one invariable principle, I have settled this vexing question by doing precisely the thing which an alert and meticulous conscience informs me is farthest from my duty. It was unfortunately some time after this affair

began that I met Miss Sayre. But I have done my best to make amends for it. We have not been married 'from the first,' it is true, but only since day before yesterday!"

X

"Of course they'll patch it up." The girl smiled reflectively as she spoke.

"It was evident," agreed Hollister, a touch of his platform manner still about him. "Well—I can look about a bit and find some satisfactory new mischief for my idle hands to do, I suppose."

She glanced at him quickly. "I think," she said, "I think I shall keep them both busy—getting me out the mischief I find for myself."

And Page Hollister, reading the gleam in her eyes, instinctively realized that she spoke truly. He sighed. No man may hope to be truly a Compleat Sinner. But he can always marry one.



WHAT IS LOVE?

By Owen Hatteras

"WHAT is love?" I once asked of a very learned Philosopher, and he talked to me for many hours, so that I became more bewildered every instant.

"What is love?" I asked of a young girl who stood upon the threshold of life. She smiled and said nothing; but I understood her silence perfectly.



WOMEN bind us hand and foot, and then inspire us to great deeds.



A SUCCESSFUL wife—one that doesn't always kiss back.

THE THIRD ACT

By Elmore Allen

THERE were eight of us who sat down to dinner at the Ashleys'. A good dinner, like any other artistic thing, must have a motif, and as I sat down and looked over the little company assembled, I could not discover any reason why Ashley had asked us, or, at any rate, why he had asked us at the same time. If he had taken special pains to choose from different circles he could not have assembled a wider variety. I imagined I could see the same questions going through the minds of the others. All of us had enough social ease to make the thing go in the physical sense, but I could feel an undercurrent of uneasiness, of nerves, that no amount of clever conversation could hide.

You have perhaps heard of those plays in Italy where the scenario of the action is hung on a post behind the stage and the actors within limits improvise their speaking parts. Something of the same sort existed that night. I felt that although I was at liberty to think and speak of many things, still there existed some undercurrent of thought, some psychic pressure that was inexorably guiding everything to a predetermined end. I have tried to make this feeling clear, for intangible as it was, unless you can sense this hidden influence you will not understand the poignant drama that all of us unwittingly had a part in playing.

Ashley, at the head of the table, proved a miserable host. He was a big man physically, one that moved and spoke with a deliberate self-control that masked an intensity of passion no little frame could bear. He was a savant, and although he had a fortune which was capable of supporting him in idle-

ness, he had made researches in ethnology that had brought his name forward in academic circles throughout the world. When he chose he was a convincing speaker, but that night he seemed content to let the conversation drift where it willed. Save a polite assent or negative when he was directly addressed, he took no part in the conversation.

Mrs. Ashley is a famous beauty. She was like a patch of brilliant sunlight in the rather sombre life of her husband. Only the world-old similes of poetry can describe her merry, buoyant spirit. When she laughed you were reminded of the spring wind in the trees. Her smile was like the brilliant flash of a bird's wing in the sun, and her voice was so delightful to hear that you forgot just exactly what it was she was saying. If it had been possible for one person to save the dinner by sheer *verve* and tact she would have saved it. But no woman born of woman could leaven the lump. Her efforts became gradually less spontaneous, and she, too, seemed to share the general uneasiness about the party. It was plain that the dinner was Ashley's, not hers.

Opposite her sat Harry Woods. He is one of those people that does everything so well that he never stays long at any one. He has written one musical comedy, published one book, won one golf match. Unaffected, wholly charming, he seems to know most of the world and most of the world knows him.

These, then, are the principals of our third act. We of the chorus do not deserve such careful scrutiny. There was Edwards, a cynical journalist, that most of us knew, few of us liked, and

all of us were a little afraid of. There was Mrs. Van Sellar, who has gained an international reputation as a gossip. She can manufacture a bona fide scandal out of whole cloth, and with but the merest fragment of a story she can rival a decadent novelist, save that she uses real names where the novelist has the decency to manufacture his along with his story. Hayden was there for comic relief, as far as I could judge. Cap this list with Miss Kirby, an intimate friend of Mrs. Ashley's, and myself, and you can realize that the mad hatter's tea party was a common sense affair by comparison.

If I were to put down sections of the conversation as I heard them drift past me, you would not believe that real people had spoken them. You would say it sounded stagey, unreal, and you would be exactly right. It was stagey, in the worst sense of that bad word, but the tragedy was that it was real, too.

Quite innocently Mrs. Van Sellar struck the dominant note when she told the story that the world knows familiarly as the Thornton scandal. She was on her own ground at last. Years of experience had given her an artistic training in that sort of thing, and she was at her best. She had all the details of that liaison at her finger tips, and she used a really fine discrimination in bringing her story to the point of doubtful good taste and then giving the rest in innuendo, pointing her story with a shrug and a laugh that I found intensely distasteful.

I could see that my distaste was shared by Mrs. Ashley and that she was waiting for an opportunity to change the subject with all the haste that politeness would allow. Edwards, however, took her opportunity away and began another such story. Once I caught a quick glance that passed from Woods to Mrs. Ashley. I could see that they were both ill at ease, but I imagined it was because he had divined how unpleasant it all was to her and felt sympathetic. Ashley listened impassively, tapping the nail of one forefinger on the edge of the table.

At last Edwards seemed to have spun his story out and there was a general movement of relief. I hoped Hayden would come to the rescue, but this time it was Ashley who took up the thread of the conversation. I had watched him since he sat almost directly opposite to me. Once or twice he had started to speak and then another impulse had checked him on the threshold of speech. At last he shifted in his chair and began in that low voice of his that seemed to fill the room without conscious effort.

"Since domestic infelicity has been the theme of the conversation I would like to tell you a story that a friend of mine told me in England."

He stopped and looked around the table slowly. I am sure that all of us, except Mrs. Van Sellar, would have given a small fortune to have the subject change, if only to the war. But Ashley was our host and if he chose to be silent during his own dinner, surely he had a right to speak now.

"Yes, do," begged Mrs. Van Sellar. "You must have seen many interesting things during your travels in savage lands. They say, you know, that marriage is one of the few primitive survivals we have in society to-day."

"Every time there is a difference among married people," pursued Ashley, "whether or not that difference becomes a crucial one; whether or not there is a violation of a marital right, there are always two sides, two angles of view, two human beings involved. Modern marriage is perhaps resting on a false basis. The old division of the man provider and the woman child-bearer, each taking a vital part in the domestic establishment, is no longer as necessary as it was."

"That is just exactly what I tell Harold," interjected Miss Kirby, who had reached the stage of her engagement where she was brazenly proud of it.

Mrs. Ashley smiled at her, started to speak, thought better of it, and turned to her occupation of tracing tiny patterns on the table cloth with the handle of her coffee spoon.

"Take, for instance, the case I am going to tell you about, Ashley went on. "The husband was a quiet man, slow to express himself, very much in love with his wife, and giving her everything she could wish. She was clever, beautiful, a woman infinitely to be desired. She had given herself to him utterly, with no mental or secret reservations. He was very happy, very proud, content to seek his pleasure and his life with her."

Ashley paused and squeezed his cigarette out on the rim of his coffee cup. Evidently he was a poor story teller. It was easy to see that he had set himself this tale as a task to redeem himself from his silence during dinner. At least I judged so from his dispassionate way of telling it. He seemed to be picking his words, using a meticulous care that detracted from the effect of his story. Mrs. Ashley scarcely seemed to hear him. She seemed busied with her own thought, back, perhaps, in some hinterland of memory.

As a raconteur Ashley did not deserve attention, but still that undercurrent of direction which had been running all through this grotesque dinner seemed to center in this story. His telling lacked any charm of art, it began to seem like a laboratory dissection of modern marriage. It sounded like a monograph by some sociologist. Yet all of us were hanging on his deliberate words, impatient for him to hurry on.

Miss Kirby had forgotten about Harold. Mrs. Van Sellar was hearing a new side of her old story told. I had the feeling that Edwards would like to be taking notes. Woods was playing with the gold fob that hung from a pocket of his vest. Either he was listening so intently that he was unconscious of the teller, or else he, too, was living back in some experience that Ashley had brought to his mind. Hayden sat bolt upright like an interested schoolboy.

"This man was called away by his business to another part of the world. He did not want to go, but it was imperative. It was the first time he had

been separated from his wife for any appreciable time. So he left."

Evidently we were going to get this story in fragments like bits of broken cork from the neck of a bottle. But each fragment added some definite thing to the preceding one, and Ashley's blunt method of telling had a certain power that began to reach out and grip each one of us.

"He was gone for some time. How she met the other man I do not know. How often they met before the spark of passion was lit, does not concern my story. I suppose they were both victims of weakness. I do not think that there was any malice in either one of them. The man was handsome, a brilliant dilettante. He had what the other man lacked. How often they swore to be true to friendship, how often they forced themselves to believe that they would never overstep the conventions; these things are another part of the story, the part that usually gets into fiction. I am telling you the reverse side, the side which must exist before the face of it can appear.

"I suppose they enjoyed the terrible pleasure of toying with a dangerous emotion. I imagine that there were notes and longings and sighs. One reads enough of them in the current magazines. There must have been the sharp anguish for the woman of breaking a heart in order to bring joy to a third. There must have been something of faith and love in her heart for the man she smirched, for she went on living with him. But I know that she made life seem to her husband like the obscene grin of a medieval grotesque, it made him see the world as a place where passion-ridden animals sin and excuse themselves weakly and go out to sin again. This much I know because the man was my friend."

Then it was that I saw the whole terrible thing. It was as plain as though Ashley had called Woods by the name of his sin. I saw the one look of terror when Woods first realized that his secret transgression was being slowly weighed out by the husband of the

woman whom he had wronged. For an instant I saw fear melt Woods' soul as a flame does wax. And then I saw him recover himself like lightning. His self-control was marvelous. It happened in two ticks of a watch—and Ashley seemed quite oblivious. Mrs. Ashley did not move. Whether she knew and was playing her part even more superbly than Woods, I do not know. The rest of the audience did not realize what was going on. I never would have seen that awful look that flashed over Woods' face.

Then it was that I witnessed one of the tensest tragedies that life has to offer. I saw Woods steel himself to play as became a man, and he did. Once he had the sublime effrontery to look Ashley in the eye, and he held Ashley's glance until I thought both men would break.

"I am not trying to win your sympathy for either side," Ashley's voice went on evenly. "I see both sides. She had never been wronged, she it was that sinned. Perhaps she was helpless, perhaps there was a strain of weakness in her blood that had marked her for this thing before she was born. One thing there is I would like to know. She had loved her husband once. She had given him trust and confidence. I have often wondered if—if perhaps she remembers her first happiness, if her present joy brings back a shadow of another, a memory of her first great love. They say that a woman can love two men, I have wondered if she ever wished for this friend of mine after she had given his right to another."

The personal note that Ashley had kept out of his voice for so long broke forth and brought a great quiet grief into his words. I had never known him before, but now I saw him as he was, lonely, proud, his love crushed and bruised. I glanced at Mrs. Ashley. What memories were stirring in her heart no one will ever know, but she was breathing fast and her eyes were dark with bitter thoughts.

Ashley turned to his auditors. "What should a man do?" he asked slowly.

"This is a question I would like to have some one of you answer. The pistol is dramatic and selfish, divorce is public, and brings shame to those who are least able to bear it." He turned suddenly to Woods and challenged him bluntly, "What would you do?"

There was a note of feeling, desire, and pent-up hatred that was unmistakable. All of the party turned to Woods, waiting his answer. I glanced over at Mrs. Ashley, and I saw her one look at him, a look of entreaty that would have turned the heart of a murderer.

Then came the most superb bit of acting I shall ever witness. Woods laid his cigar down slowly, as though thinking over his answer. I could see that the end of it was bitten into rags. "I think that you were right," he began slowly, and his voice gathered in evenness and power, "right, when you said that there were two sides to the question. The third man deserves nothing but blame, but the wife—"

The crash of a breaking glass shivered through his dry words. Mrs. Ashley's nerveless hand had swept one of the liqueur glasses from the table. The sudden shock shattered Woods' control as a sudden blow will splinter a door.

"God," he burst forth, "have you had enough, Ashley?" and he rose, very white, and leaned over toward him.

"Yes," said Ashley, and I saw him tremble as he fought for control. "Mrs. Ashley can begin divorce proceedings as soon as she chooses. But you, you will be known for the hound that you are, and she, if she chooses to kennel with you—it is not my affair."

The cold hatred in his voice was deadly. Involuntarily Woods shrank back a step. Mrs. Ashley sat dazed, with eyes that stared past us all. The rest of us had not moved. Then, without a word, Ashley rose and left.

Thus it was that we played out the third act. What happened after the curtain fell is the affair of the stage manager and the scene shifters, and is no business of ours. If you must know, call on Mrs. Van Sellar. She tells the story very well.

THE OUTCAST

By Gordon Seagrove

1

I AM an outcast.
Everywhere I turn I meet contempt,
Yet my collar is white
And I have a new \$28 overcoat.
Still I am dishonored among men.
Be patient—
I shall tell you:

2

I evince no interest in the way Mary Fuller does her hair.
What is Mary Fuller's hair to me?
Nothing, I tell you.
Were she bald I would not die of grief.
But alas, *she* would,
I daresay.

3

I care not that Carlyle Blackwell has 400 pairs of trousers,
That he eats fish only once in 10 years,
That his pajamas are made of silk,
Passionate pink silk,
And that he bathes his eyes in goat's milk.
Jehovah! Is not my indifference awful?
Assuredly.

4

In the long cold watches of the night I have fought with my soul.
"Fish that you are!" I have cried and pummelled my chest in impotent fury,
"Why are you not mad about Francis X. Bushman?"
Why does not the fact that he has 38,000 separate and distinct hairs in his
head thrill you through and through?"
I cannot answer.
In spite of the 38,000 I cannot.
With a low moan I cry:
"No; I am not mad about Francis X. Bushman."
Then I realize—
I am mad *at* him!

5

Try as I may I cannot shout with glee when I learn
 That J. Warren Kerrigan's favorite flower is the violet,
 That his great-grandmother died at the ripe old age of 110 from eating
 sauerkraut,
 That his favorite pastime is paring peaches.
 Therefore I weep.

6

And Blanche Sweet.
 Is she not?
 She is.
 Why cannot I chortle with delight at the things I learn about her?
 True, she broke a tooth in infancy,
 Yet I do not appreciate it.
 She refuses to eat any but the seventh son of the seventh son of an oyster;
 Even so, why should I care?
 I know of no reason.
 Can any of my correspondents give me the answer?

7

And Mary Pickford.
 Ah, pretty thing that she is!
 Long have I tried to grow glad knowing:
 That she shines her teeth with 4 X Blacking
 And polishes her shoes with Dentaline
 And combs her hair with Rim-cut combs
 And preserves her figure with soap—
 Non-Sinkable Soupbone Soap.
 And that her cat died of anthrax
 And that her maid wears a ring through her nose after the ancient Indian
 fashion
 All, all, all—
 They leave me cold.
 Like an isosceles triangle.

8

Perhaps now you see why in spite of my \$28 overcoat and my nice white collar
 I am an outcast.
 I weep.
 And again,
 I weep.



BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS

By Paul Hervey Fox

TOWARDS evening Abel Taintor slouched indifferently down the dirtiest street of the town in the direction of the cluster of tawdry lights that marked Saloon Alley. He did not look particularly like a gentleman bent upon the fevered pleasures of the nighttime. He did not look like a gentleman seeking to squander his money in an alcoholic orgy. Nor was he. In fact, he didn't have any money. He was making towards Saloon Alley with the hope of bumming a drink from someone intoxicated enough or foolish enough to treat him.

It must be confessed that he was not very eager for the drink. He did not yearn passionately with every fiber aching and every nerve tingling, as the human documents will have it. He merely desired it mildly and was aware that he might possibly gratify that desire by a little sycophancy.

It was early yet, too early for the saloons to be in full swing, so he took his leisure. He wished to arrive when the crowd was big and jolly and careless and generous. It must be all those things for the thirsty man with an empty pocket. The latter condition was normal in Abel's case. He was a simple, rather silly little man who did odd-jobs in a Western town, and did them so badly that he was always out of funds. His wife, a loud-voiced, fat-armed woman of forty, took in washing to meet her own expenses.

When Abel had walked a few steps further an experience befell him. He found himself in front of the big tabernacle that had been erected for the travelling evangelist who was in town last week. He stopped and stared at the

flimsy structure with his pale-blue eyes wide and his mouth partly open. There was no reason for astonishment. He had seen the building in the process of construction and there was nothing awry about it now. But Abel was invariably bewildered at everything.

It occurred to him that the saloon would not be full-up till after the meeting; in an isolated town like his an evangelist was as popular as a negro minstrel . . . and sometimes more elevating. As Abel stood there a wisp of cold breeze seemed to spring up, and, to his astonishment, he hesitated. For he felt a sudden desire to enter. But then someone might see him, someone might tell! His woman, now, she'd lay him out tidy if she heard of his goings-on.

Abel remained with one foot on the doorstep, inclination tugging him one way and duty the other. A life of laxness had softened his will. Surrendering to the call of pleasure, he fell.

When he found himself in the vestibule, a pale young man smiled upon him in a gushing manner, and beckoning him archly as if he were about to disclose some risqué secret, silently led him to a seat in the rear of the hall. Abel sat down heavily, and twiddled his new hat with his fingers. He was proud of that hat. It had a peak like a navy-officer's cap, and it made him look like a chaffeur, a deckhand, and a laboring-man all in one.

The evangelist, it happened, was just then at the height of his oratory. He was asking alms, and doing it well, to judge from the tense, thick-breathing crowd leaning forward on the hard benches. He was a thin-necked man

with a big Adam's apple that moved convulsively when he talked. It was fascinating to watch it. He gesticulated with his hands in a furious way and his eyes were dancing with the fire of the fanatic.

"You people, here," he shrilled in a voice that had long since gone raucous under the strain, "give for the glory o' God and the sake o' your immortal souls! Oh, men, men! There's someone worse off'n you! Someone more wretched than the most wretched and miserable amongst you! Someone in this little city poorer than the poorest of you! And givin' ain't merely givin' that which you don't need. It's partin' with somethin' that you *do* need! You may not have money, but you can give other things. Clothes—a coat will help. Jewels—a watch or a ring that will go to buy food for the starvin'! *And remember this, remember this, bread cast upon the waters is bread that's a-comin' back to you!*"

He said these final words in an impressive hiss of sound. Then he sank dramatically to his knees on the platform and hid his face in his hands. At the same instant—apparently a carefully rehearsed one—a cheap organ on one side of the structure gave forth a violent medley of sound. From behind the hall four men stepped, carrying metal plates and large hampers, and slowly proceeding from aisle to aisle to the accompaniment of the loud, crude music.

The evangelist's words, crass as they were, had been put with such vigour that the crowd was stirred. Money rattled on upon the metal trays and bills were thrown in with trembling fingers. The hampers were choked with bundles—most of the women had brought them along for that purpose, for it had been announced that this particular meeting was largely for the purpose of collecting cast-off clothing for the poor and placing it in proper hands for distribution.

In his particular row Abel sat transfixed. His face was red; his pulses were pounding; his poor, shallow little

soul was profoundly moved. For years nothing had more lifted him out of himself. A rattling good melodrama could have excited him not less. The next moment he was aware that the usher was before him. He saw the latter dimly as if he were wrapped in a cloud. Then with a defiant gesture, and his face shining with emotional impulse, he lifted his precious cap and tossed it into the hamper.

When he got outside later there was still some of the exaltation in him. But as he stood on the pavements looking despairingly towards Saloon Alley, the reaction began to set in and he felt a little foolish. It was useless to go farther without a hat; there was nothing left to do but to sneak home.

Having reached the ramshackle tenement wedged in with a number of others in a filthy street of the poor quarter, he dodged cautiously into the hallway, but was frustrated in his design. His wife caught him just as he was trying to glide unobtrusively into the rear room.

"Hullo!" she snapped. "What are you doin' at this time? You're an early bird, you are. . . . Where's your hat?"

"I guess I must a lost it," muttered Abel uneasily.

"Lost it?" She scrutinized him closely. "You ain't been drinkin', so you couldn't have done it. What did you do with your hat, I said?"

"I—I—" Abel's imagination failed him. He gave it up limply. "I give it away at the meetin'."

"Meetin'? Meetin'! You—fool! You poor, helpless fool! You oughter be put in an asylum. You—"

"But he said," interposed Abel weakly. "as how bread cast upon the waters—"

"Bread! Well, is hats bread?"

With a sigh Abel retreated within, while a string of taunts and upbraidings flowed steadily from his devoted mate.

The next day he stayed indoors. It would be queer, indeed, to go out in cold weather without a hat. How was he going to get another? If he was to

procure the money from his wife he knew he would have to pay the price in nagging. Bitterly did he repent his fall from grace. Someone came to the front door that day. He heard his wife go, but when she came back he did not ask her who the visitor was—though visitors were a rarity in Abel's household.

Late in the evening on the following day there came, however, still another. Abel heard the wheezy door open and the rap of fingers on the dirty panel.

Presently, to his surprise, he heard his wife call him into the hallway. He shuffled out and found himself confronting a smooth-faced young man with a notebook. He recognized him as one of the charity-workers of the town's Settlement House.

"Yes," he was saying, "the inspector called yesterday, and got the record here. All we can allow you, Madam,

of the requests you made, is a ton of coal, a pair of shoes, and a hat. Is that all right?"

Abel's wife nodded.

The young man turned. The driver of a wagon outside was carrying up the steps a small basket. From the top of this the young man took out a hat.

"Here's the hat," he said. "It's for you, I suppose," he added, presenting it to Abel.

Abel stared at it with his eyes wearing their bewildered expression. "Yes," he said simply.

"Does it fit you?" inquired the young man.

"Yes," said Abel.

"But you haven't tried it on," the charity-worker expostulated with a grin.

"No," answered Abel apologetically. "You see I don't need to. It's my hat."



A GIRL'S FORGIVENESS

By Eugene Dolson

SHE stood at the mirror.

"He must love me,"

She said to herself,

"For I am charmingly beautiful.

He told me tonight

That my cheeks were roses,

My blue eyes fountains of love,

My vermillioned mouth fashioned for kisses,

And that my figure was more than comparable

With that of Cleopatra.

"This is wonderfully high praise;

And I am dying to know

If he really loves me.

He has told me so, over and over,

And I am inclined to believe him.

But even if his vows are perjury,

Even if he does not love me,

I think I could almost forgive him

To hear him lie so sweetly."

A FAMOUS MUSICIAN

By J. H. Thorne

WHEN I was young, my mother stood beside me, as I practised.

If I missed a note, she rapped my fingers with a pencil.

If I became tired, I dared not say so, for she would have punished me.

She did not allow me any composition which lilted and trilled with the throbbing call of youth.

I had to be contented with the sombre songs of the masters.

So I became the great artist that I am to-day.

But once, while we were summering at the seaside, I ran away and entered a cheap restaurant,

Where a negro sat at a battered, untuned piano,

And coaxed forth wild, fascinating melodies.

That started the people stamping their feet upon the floor

And made their weary, sordid faces light up like the sunshine of a day in April.

I knew that the music was syncopated, trashy, not worthy of serious attention.

But, somehow, my feet began to tap rhythmically under the table,

And down in the depths of my heart there stirred a song that had never before been able to find utterance.

Ever since I have longed to compose something like that,

Unguided by scientific laws, but able to make the world forget its troubles.

I have never been able to do so.

I am a great artist.

I cannot understand the soul of the lower classes.



DESTINY

By K. S. Winston

TWO roses on a single stem

Grew side by side;

And then, one in a lifeless hand,

One to a bride.



CURING STEPHEN

By Kenneth Christie

EVERYONE volubly agreed, and meant it, that the Massons were really quite an ideal couple—the ideal couple, in fact. There was no doubt that it would have been rather difficult to find a nicer chap than Stephen—young, good looking, disgustingly comfortably off, and as firm a friend and perfect a husband as one would ever see. There was no doubt, also, that it would have been even more difficult to find a bullier girl than Edith—fresh, alive, wholesomely pretty, and quite the best wife and entertaining hostess and sympathetic pal one could have known.

They had been married for a bit under three years and were still as vitally interested and thoroughly in love with each other as at the very first—even more so, if anything. Most of the set wondered at it—some marveled at it. They never seemed to have eyes for anyone else; never attended separate affairs in the evening; never went out at all if the other for some reason had to stay at home, illness or some slight indisposition. Too, they had a young heir to the throne whom they were both mad over. All in all, they *were* about the ideal couple!

And then, with ghastly suddenness, Stephen apparently went all to pieces and completely lost his head. Oh, yes; he was only a trifle over twenty-four, remember.

The woman was fascinating, not to mention voluptuously alluring—especially as she was about twelve years older than he. She was the widow of a chap who some years before had run about all the time with the older people of their circle—had been one of the favorites, in fact. They had lived abroad

for the last eight or nine years, and he had died over there. Consequently, when Rheta Tenniel had come back to New York, she had immediately got in touch with old friends and taken up where she had left off.

There was no doubt as to her beauty; a tall, not very slightly built woman with the form of a strong Goddess. She had those big black eyes that were always mocking a man, a dazzlingly white skin that was gorgeously tinted, and a massive, glorious head of hair that burned like virgin gold. Also, she was really an expert at the game, always to be relied upon to say the thing to please any male and to use her eyes with corresponding acumen. She had one hobby—one great joy in life—and that was to flirt outrageously with every married man she met, young or old, stupid or clever, homely or otherwise. So long as they were married—so long as there was a wife to enter into the question—she asked no more!

Naturally, the very first evening she met the Massons she instantly saw the situation and joyously decided that here was something richer than she had struck in some time. She lost no time, indeed, in maneuvering to allow Stephen the privilege of sitting out exactly four dances with her—a thing he hadn't done with any other one woman in the same evening since his marriage.

Oh, yes; Stephen fell—fell with a reverberating thud. He was young, you see, and he'd never quite met a woman like Rheta in his whole life. Of course, it was a simple task for her to handle him as she wished—and she must have laughed at the ease of the conquest. Anyway, when the evening was over he was quite mad—really wild about her.

Edith had noticed it; but, sensible young person that she was, had not said a word to Stephen. Instead, she talked glowingly, as they were being driven home, of "that perfectly charming and wonderful Mrs. Tenniel that we *must* have a dinner for soon and see a lot of!"

After that, it was quite evident to everyone that Stephen was decidedly interested in Rheta Tenniel. He tead with her a bit, called on her a bit more, and certainly managed to be just where she was. Also, he was young enough and simple enough—for he *was* simple in some ways—to go so far as to talk about her several times at his clubs—though only to his intimates, frankly. It was chiefly her hair and skin he raved about, bringing up all sorts of marvelously complimentary similes as to the unsurpassable beauty of them.

None of the set said a word to him; some of them were badly worried; but most of them thought it would turn out all right in the end. Edith, although she never said a thing to him, knew the situation perfectly. However, she seemed at ease and not a bit concerned—at least outwardly. Of course, it was all perfectly harmless up to now.

Then, it being spring and warm for the season, Edith suddenly decided to have a house-party up on their place on the Sound. Perhaps a dozen or more were asked—and Mrs. Tenniel was among them. Her idea, no doubt, was that by throwing Stephen and his charmer together for day in and day out, he might see enough of her and come to his senses.

But in this respect, it seemed, Edith had gone hopelessly wrong. A week went by, ten days went by, two weeks went by—and still Stephen seemed as thoroughly foolish as before. He was always finding some excuse for being with Rheta—motoring, fishing, walking, sailing, everything and anything he could think of. So much so, in fact, that even the most optimistic began to get nervous; a few of them called him a cad and she a sorceress; and most all of them at last gave up hope.

Edith, however, seemed to go serenely on, noticing nothing. It was exactly like her, of course, not to say a word to a soul. As for Rheta Tenniel, she was almost literally in heaven. Certainly she thought she was creating a very devil of a muss; and that, when she herself didn't get burnt, was just about the jolliest thing in the world.

Stephen had made light love to her, probably, but it hadn't gone much further than that. She wasn't that type. All she wanted was the fun of breaking things up a bit—and she was having it.

One night, however, Stephen kicked over the traces and became a bit obstreperous. For the first time he kissed her, meeting her in a little nook in the hallway as she was about to retire. Then, going completely wild, he mouthed idiotic stuff about his wanting her and worshipping her and begging her to run off with him so that he might always caress her "velvet skin and silk gold tresses!"

Mrs. Tenniel, though, whispered softly something about "in the morning" and rushed off to her room, sending a light little laugh floating back that was calculated—and did—to make him the more eager! . . .

But a climax usually comes in such situations. This was no exception—and it happened to be in the form of a shrill, terror-stricken cry of "Fire!" at about three in the morning.

In just about forty-five seconds the hall was filled—men and women streaming down from the top floor and others rushing from their rooms on the second—where the fire was. The attire was scanty and in some cases a revelation—but no one seemed to mind that. Everyone was wildly shouting and wanting to know where the fire was.

Edith, above the din, informed them that it was in her room and begged them hurry and put it out. She'd been reading by lamplight and had knocked the thing over and lost her head completely. But hurry, hurry—would they hurry!

Then, as most everyone rushed for her room, there came a cry from the

floor above—a harrowing, piercing, terror-stricken shriek of "help." It was, they discovered, Mrs. Tenniel's voice—but a far, far different one than the perfectly modulated one they had always known. She kept howling about being locked in and burned to death!

Stephen, of course, was the first to heed the wail and spring madly up the stairs—and two other men and as many women followed him. Getting there, he assured her that there was no danger and that the fire was being put out—but she only howled the louder and implored him to break down the door. She had lost or misplaced her key after locking her door and she would be burnt to death. Certainly she was wild with fear; and, although they vowed that the danger was now almost over, she insisted hysterically that the door be broken down. Against these entreaties, Stephen and another chap put their shoulders to the wood and sent it crashing in! . . .

Later, the chap who'd helped Stephen said that the moment the door went down he thanked fate that the lamp had overturned—for Stephen, with a gasp of surprise and unbelief and almost horror, stepped dazedly back and stood there as if paralyzed.

Mrs. Tenniel had on a light wrap over her nightdress—and it was wound about her in such a manner that told her figure was not all everyone had supposed it to be. Her hair, too, was strangely thin and strangely darker and strangely ordinary—quite different, indeed, than the huge switches of virgin gold that she'd formerly worn and that were now on the dresser. Her skin, also, was pitifully unlike the soft velvet, so exquisitely tinted, that they had always seen—for it was colorless and lifeless and horribly shiny with some thick stuff that was plastered thickly on. Or, yes, it was a disillusion—a cruel, ghastly, nerve-racking disillusion! . . .

But Mrs. Tenniel wasn't thinking of this; she was thinking only that the danger was over and that she was not, after all, to be burned alive. Stephen, however, was thinking of her appear-

ance. Anyway, his eyes were round and staring, his mouth gaping, his body sagging. Then, mumblingly, blushing-ly, he assured her that there was no further danger and went downstairs to get some more sleep!

* * * * *

Breakfast, at the Massons', was always a very nice affair—for people dropped down for it at any hour they wished and without any ceremony at all. The morning after the fire, when Stephen sauntered in at about eight, Edith was there before him, daintily sipping her coffee.

"Good morning, Steve!"

Her husband blushed: "Lo, Ede!"

A twinkle came to Edith's eyes—but instantly her face grew deeply sympathetic:

"Oh, you don't know about it yet, do you? The dreadful fire shocked Mrs. Tenniel horribly. She took the six-forty-eight back to town this morning. She said her nerves were so badly damaged that she just had to put herself in charge of her physician! . . . I'm so sorry, Steve. You and she *did* so much enjoy your motoring and fishing trips!"

Stephen reddened and studied his plate lengthily. At last he raised his face—although it was still crimson—and chuckled:

"Say—say, Ede. Did—did I tell you about her hair and her complexion? Wasn't it—wasn't it *awful*? . . . Nothing like that for my girlie, eh?"

And he leaned over, stroked his wife's hair, and softly kissed her cheek—quite thoroughly cured.

Edith smiled, returned his caress, and then pulled something from her lap. She looked Stephen squarely in the eyes, a humorous little twinkle in her own grey ones:

"Oh, Steve—before I forget. Will you please put this key back on the door of Mrs. Tenniel's room? I—I found it!"

Stephen gasped, stared—and then roared:

"That lamp—that locked door—Wowzie—one on me!"

MY WIFE

By Hugh Blair

MY wife knows when the Smiths are having visitors.
My wife knows when the Jones baby has a new tooth.
My wife knows how often that young man calls on Nancy Cozens.
My wife knows if Jimpson stays out late at night.
My wife knows how much salary Mrs. Miller's husband gets.
My wife knows how Mrs. Williams' new dress is to be made. And who is to make it.
My wife knows that the new family, the Youngs, are fibbing when they say they spent the summer at Bar Harbor.
My wife knows that Mr. Braun likes his little bottle of schnapps every night.
My wife knows that young Mrs. Wellar thought of applying for a divorce when she found a blonde hair on her husband's coat. Mrs. Wellar is *not* a blonde.
My wife has a suspicion that the cute little widow Springer is a divorcée.
My wife knows that Mrs. Jordan's husband once lost three hundred dollars in a gold mine swindle.
My wife knows that the nice young doctor around the corner comes often to see Mrs. Custer, who looks perfectly strong and healthy, and she wonders if she is ill. (She has her suspicions!)

My wife knows that Mrs. Hazleton plays bridge for money! How she ever does it on her husband's salary—which my wife knows, too—my wife doesn't know.
My wife knows Mrs. Hughes was engaged to a ribbon clerk before she met and married the broker.
My wife knows that Mrs. Blackton, who takes such an interest in church work, was once a burlesque actress.
My wife knows that Mrs. Fredericke Rogers-Coate once lived in Leaches Corners, Pa.
My wife knows that Mrs. Farr uses lip rouge and wears false hair.
My wife knows that Mrs. Breckenridge would rather read a novel than do housework. Such sloppy people!
My wife knows that Mrs. Bransom is jealous of her husband's stenographer.
My wife knows that the Kaysers have saved the baby carriage, even though little Billy is able to walk.
My wife knows what churches all these people attend.
And I know, too.



LOVE begins like a triolet and ends like a college yell.

ANOTHER HEDDA-WOMAN

By Lilith Benda

AS the Craigs entered the room, Arnold Hollis grew aware of a certain vibration, a curious quickening of interest which years of unswerving dilettanteism in art and love had taught him to recognize as an unfailing indication of some new and interesting experience ahead. Mark Craig he had come purposely to this somewhat tedious dinner to meet. The artist's astounding innovations in his studies of the nude, his ability to infuse new life into the most moth-eaten of themes, and artistically to treat a subject damned by well-nigh unescapable conventionalization,—the splendid temerity, the incisive, merciless force with which he studied his models, set down their racial and individual traits, at the same time magnificently disregarding them, and making of them merely various tinted phases in his broad harmonies of subdued color,—all had attracted Hollis.

He found the artist almost an exact counterpart of the mental picture he had formed. A man of some sixty years, unobtrusive, imperturbable, there was revealed in his face more of a gentle, genial nature unspoiled by misanthropy than of the man whose trenchantly sarcastic, profoundly cutting art criticisms had become known the world over. About him there was none of the inept glamour which little men find so essential. Neither in his dress, nor in his speech, nor in his manner was there anything blatantly distinctive. He provoked no hum of whispers, no sudden turning of necks, when he appeared.

Not so his wife. Carolyn Craig never came into a room. Always she made her entrance. Through politely low-

ered lashes, the eyes of everyone became instantly fixed upon this woman some twenty-five years her husband's junior, who looked every day of her thirty-six years and not an hour older. With a keen sense of irritation, Hollis found himself doing, for once, the usual thing and staring at her quite as steadfastly as anybody else. There was something supremely insolent in the woman's careless nods and perfunctory glances, something deliberately disdainful which, however, was effectively antidoted by her tremulous smile. Hollis noted how oddly her mouth, little, child-like, and weak, contrasted with the chin, so firm when seen in profile. She was a woman of many and vivid contrasts, he thought at once. Utterly at variance with the coarse, black, peasant hair, a pair of patrician eyebrows arched exquisitely over eyes large, protuberant, dead-looking, and of a pale amber shade, which, in turn, were rendered even larger and lighter by the tawinness, the swathiness almost, of her richly tinted skin. The straight, classic nose contradicted her high cheek-bones; the height and splendid poise, an attenuation which would have been hideous but for a frame-work of bones so exiguous and dainty as to require little covering, and give her all the charms of perfect wrists and ankles, and of a back, if not indisputable, at least worthy of wholesome respect. Her gown was of copper-coloured velvet fashioned in long, flowing Botticelli lines, and embroidered in subdued shades of red, green, and old gold. A single cabochon emerald hung at her neck, and at her breast there was a cluster of green orchids.

But what struck Hollis most forcibly

was that, despite her exotic appearance, she did not remotely suggest the orchidaceous Sardou vampire. If to her walk there was an undulating grace, the well-poised head and shoulders saved it from any hint of slinkiness. About her there was an attraction of freshness, of cleanness which, to Hollis, linked itself incongruously with his first impression of a Baudelairean fascination in decay. She seemed to possess all the power of strength with all the allure of frailty. She looked like an invaluable odalisque.

A young man rose and hurried toward her. With the gracious indifference of a queen accepting the greeting of her favourite slave, she received the homage of his low bow and suppliant look. In his corner Hollis smiled. He had heard of Mrs. Craig's "ugly ducklings" of promise whom she gathered about her, guided through the labyrinthine years of the early twenties, and transformed into beautiful swans,—young men who adored her from afar, sought for her eyes and lips in the faces of their loves, and made of her an ideal, a symbol for the divine unattainable. And yet why was it, he wondered, that there was nothing destructive in the influence of this woman who might so easily have played the unfathomable temptress to these guileless striplings? Why did proud mothers want always to have their sons know Mrs. Craig? And why, on the other hand, did she bother with the tiresome adolescents? Decidedly, his interest had swerved from the artist to the artist's wife. Quite forgetting his original intention of inveigling Craig into one of his incomparable discussions of æsthetics, he resolved to arrange a conversation with this amber-eyed woman of the fluttering, child-like smile.

Circumstances, however, were against him. It was Carolyn Craig herself who eventually brought about the conversation. Fate and a blundering hostess placed the two far apart at the dinner-table, and Hollis found himself seated next to a diminutive ingénue of that sheer prettiness which so often tri-

umphs over the more breath-bereaving beauty in the conquest of the male. He found irresistible her little, laughing voice so like the tinkling of tiny bells in the distance, and, with his usual vacillation, remembered only vaguely Mrs. Craig's peculiar eyes in his contemplation of orbs greyer and softer than the breast of the first little cloud that ushers in the first April shower. After dinner he succeeded successfully in steering her to a somewhat remote, and picturesque divan. But scarcely were they ensconced under the swinging oriental lamps when Carolyn Craig bore swiftly down upon them with her latest ugly duckling in tow.

"Sorry," she purred, "most awfully, awfully sorry, but this youth says the conservatory is all a-stream with moonlight, and is possessed of a mad desire to sit there and dream dreams. A conservatory is the legitimate lair of the débutante, and so, dear,"—she patted the ingénue's shoulder,—"if perhaps you will run off with him to chat for a while over the pursuit of the ideal?"

Reluctantly the girl rose. Reluctantly the boy took her arm. Reluctantly Hollis, annoyed at the high-handed invasion, turned to the woman at his side. And, as if half reluctantly, the woman seated herself.

"Don't say it," she admonished as his lips parted. "I'm certain it's something very, very polite, and very, very satiric. It *was* rude of me, I admit, but the situation demanded it. Altruism insisted upon it. You see, I'd heard so many stories of your fascinations and wickedness that I was quite prepared to meet an inexpressibly dull, and absolutely impeccable citizen of the state. And when you disappointed me so agreeably, when I beheld the flawless features and bored smile of a Lucien de Rubempré, then in pity I could do no more than save you. Ingénues like wicked men. It's just the instinct of the female for devastation. She likes to find you thrillingly bad creatures, and fashion you into irredeemably respectable males. I quite under-

stand it. But enlighten me,—what's the attraction that the pure young girl has for the wicked man? What's this charm of innocence?"

He was content to sit with her now. She was not too tiresomely clever, and had about her none of the metallic sharpness, on the one hand, nor the whining sweetness, on the other, which he had come to associate with women who went in for brains. In her voice there was a rich, penetrant quality. It was to the velvety voice of tradition as is sealskin to plush.

"Innocence is charming," he answered, "only if innocence have pretty eyes and hair. Then it awakens an artistic instinct, a latent longing to fashion the statue from the clay. It is excessively interesting, you know, to find a woman innocent, and leave her—interesting."

She sat quite close, looking up at him with her head thrown back, and her eyes laughing more than her lips.

"You *are* bad," she murmured at last, "but tell me, just what is your idea of an interesting woman?"

"A woman whose lips retain all the charm of innocence and whose eyes reveal all the wisdom of the sibyls."

"The sibyls prophesied. Shall I?"

"Disaster?"

"Never! Disaster lurks only among the shoals of the profound. I swim in the safest of all depths,—the depths of the superficial. I'm a shallow woman, you see. Do you fancy shallow women?"

"Dear lady, you're a woman, so why employ tautology? And I'm excessively fond of women. But don't slander the superficial by giving it depths. In its shallowness lies all its fascination. Endow it with profundity, and it becomes the commonplace."

"As for tautology," she asked, laughing, "have I called you either a sentimental cynic, or a gyneolatrous misogynist? You accuse me unjustly. And as for the superficial, I believe, in spite of what you say, that it has its depths,—the only depths, in fact, hitherto unexplored. The ugly ducklings

have taught me that. Do you know," she sighed, "I'm the least bit tired of my ugly ducklings? Adoration, I admit, is no longer adoration, when it ceases to come from a distance,—but there are distances and distances. One grows finally weary of being hoisted up into the clouds to receive it. What I should like is to be adored from across a very narrow but unnavigable stream. Would you care,"—as if unconsciously she moved a little closer,—"would you by any chance care to adore me for a while from across a very narrow but unnavigable stream?"

He was slightly taken aback. This woman wasted no time. And the suddenness of her attack gave to her somewhat threadbare strategics all the grace of spontaneity. She was so close to him now that if there had been even the faintest perfume in her hair it would have reached him. He was glad that there was none. An earmark of the habitual temptress, its absence seemed somehow to absolve her from any charge of deliberate man-hunting.

"They call me a dilettante," he answered, after a pause. "I'm proud of the title, for to me it signifies all that it has come not to signify,—an eager enthusiast who enjoys a view of Parnassus from a neighboring valley, without himself entertaining secret aspirations of climbing the sacred mount. And with love it is the same way. I enjoy it thoroughly without ever experiencing any of the soul agony of the real lover, so that at forty I find myself neither jaded nor bored, but always anxious to acquire a new view of it. Your proposition charms me and I accept the terms. But, whether navigable or not, that stream you speak of may possibly be forded. I've told you I don't believe in the depths of the superficial, and I warn you fairly that I'll make every attempt to get across, and climb up on the other side."

For a moment she grew serious, and shook her head.

"Do you know, you're a little callow for all your forty years? You have a bit of the crudeness of the unchastened

young, who think always that the other side of any stream is the pleasanter side. You—"

She stopped, as, unobtrusive, imperceptible, Mark Craig came into the room. Hollis was astounded by the woman's audacity. Seated as she was so close that her face almost touched his, she never by so much as a fraction of an inch altered her attitude, or let the provocative smile fade from her lips.

Only, as her husband approached, she held out her slim, shapely hands to him in a gesture which struck Hollis as the most beautiful he had ever seen. It was so impulsive, so unconscious, as not to seem, even with a stranger present, a social solecism. It was at once suppliant and protective, at once humble and proud, at once that of a slave and that of a mother. It made him recall the woman of Judea who washed a Nazarene's feet.

But when he glanced at her face, he saw the smile still there, and the hard light in her eyes.

"Mr. Hollis and I have had so interesting a conversation, Mark," she said, "all about depths and shoals and things. He's been smashing all my pet theories, and urging others upon me quite too traditionally iconoclastic to be altogether new."

Hollis was puzzled. The woman was more than interesting. She attracted, she fascinated, and what perplexed him most was that she did not correspondingly repel. His pride as a sage in woman lore was hurt, for he could not label, could not place her definitely in any one category. He found himself possessed of an eager desire to cultivate, and eventually to solve, her.

Once, again, and many times he called on the Craigs. Asked first to formal dinners, then to less ceremonious affairs, he arrived within a surprisingly short time at that stage when, as an intimate friend, he dropped in casually almost every day, either to talk art with Craig, who had taken a strong liking to him, or to spend an hour with

Carolyn, sometimes in silent contemplation of her light tenderness toward the ugly ducklings who hovered about her in throngs, sometimes in conversation,—conversation he had come anxiously to anticipate, and thoroughly to enjoy.

It made him a trifle uneasy, this ardent expectancy with which each day he looked forward to seeing her. Forced finally to acknowledge that the woman had a tremendous appeal, he was utterly at a loss exactly to define it. It was not intellectual; for all the light cleverness of her badinage, he had met women far more startlingly brilliant. Nor was it primarily physical. But, despite her hardness, her smoothness, her time-worn tactics of sudden attacks, quick retorts, and deft evasions, a latent sweetness seemed to linger about the woman, a something which, when he was with her, made him think the world a better place, and himself a bigger man; which brought back some of the glow and the glamour of youth. He cursed himself for an egregious fool, determined never to call again, and within a week was back again only too glad to fancy that he read in the big, cold eyes a promise of final surrender. An ideal,—an illusion,—a something unreal,—an abyss of fragrance and color,—all these she suggested. And Arnold Hollis, dilettante, flaneur, Lothario, rake, famed for his many and easy conquests, could not but admit that even he felt a tendency to dreams and aspirations when in her presence. And with the admission, he discovered for the first time the basic quality of her charm. The woman possessed the chief asset in any inventory of feminine allure. She was able at will to evoke an *au delà*.

Her relations with her husband puzzled him. Mark Craig was enwrapped in his work, and spent little of his time with his wife. And yet Hollis read in each one of the few glances this old man bestowed upon the woman so much younger than he, a tranquil adoration, a placid trust and affection. Her bearing toward him was very much her bearing toward the ugly ducklings.

There was the same easy indifference, the same mocking assurance. But whereas her treatment of the striplings bespoke a maternal kindness, with her husband it deepened into something suggestive of limitless humility.

One evening, over coffee and cigarettes, Hollis sat with her after dining. Craig had hurried back to his studio, and she had denied herself to callers. They were alone but for her dog, a shaggy nondescript whose ugliness offended Hollis' æsthetic sense. It rose now from the rug, yawned, stretched itself ungainly, and waddled over to its mistress.

"Good old Hamlet!" She patted the unkempt head.

"Why, in the name of all that is sacred, Hamlet?" he asked.

"Because his parents were a pure breed Airedale and a gutter cur,—like the Titans, you see, at once earth- and heaven-born. Because, like Hamlet, he's a Titan, with the Titan tragedy in his heart,—that of being unable to reconcile what's in him of the divine with what's of the mud and muddy. Because, like Hamlet, my dog is a poet, a philosopher, a martyr, a tyrant, a slave, a cynic, an idealist, a voluptuary, an ascetic. And because, like Hamlet, he looks at a woman with hurt and vacant eyes."

"But poor Hamlet's woman was a rather sorry specimen of the sex. If she'd been—"

"Don't," she interrupted. "The idea's unworthy of you. It's the prattle of college professors. 'If Ophelia had been a woman of character and strength this and that would have happened,' they say. But to me Ophelia stands as the symbol of all of us women, of an inferior race entirely earth-born, to whom the deepest side of you men must remain an insoluble riddle, and to whom a perverse destiny has granted the power sometimes of playing havoc with all that is finest in man. Oh, it sickens me! Between men and mere males, I differentiate. But among men, while some of the lesser laugh at us, and dismiss us as inconsequential, the

highest, those of the most exquisitely delicate soul-structure, are stirred by us to deeds and aspirations we can't even remotely understand. And then to fail them! It's wrong to deny women souls, for souls we have, but they're such thick-skinned souls! We're like a lot of awkward servant-girls plying feather dusters among priceless porcelains,—although I admit the simile clumsier than the most devastating of house-maids."

She looked up smiling, a smile which faded quickly away, to be followed first by a look of uneasiness, then by a light, hard laugh, as, with the usual provocation in her dead-looking eyes which but a moment ago had glowed so warmly, she leaned toward him.

"You frighten me a little," she said. "You look as if you were ready to ford that stream we once discussed and I tremble for your safety. I tell you, it has depths, and you're not as good a swimmer as I."

There was a moment's silence. "You have such faith in your natatory prowess," he said at length, "let me test it. The other day I bought a picture, one of the most entrancing Pissaros I've ever seen. I know you're fond of Pissaros, so if you will honor me with a visit to-morrow at five, I'll show you one of his finest examples, and brew you a cup of excellent Pekoe. Will you?"

She looked at him, her trembling lips betraying the laughter she tried to control.

"He's asking me to his rooms to tea! Actually asking me to his rooms, and with some of the stage villain's smooth assurance, too! But I can't refuse. It's quite, quite too irresistibly tempting. Fancy just, perhaps, will be able to bring new life into the threadbare situation, as Mark did with his nudes,—by employing all the mad indiscretion of absolute innocence, you know."

The next day, as the fixed hour approached, Hollis found himself nervous and uneasy as a callow boy awaiting his first potential mistress. He was exas-

perated to discover himself searching the perfectly appointed rooms for a fugitive speck of dust, trying the effects of the various coloured lamps, stirring the fire to greater brilliance, and actually pausing before the mirror to acquire confidence from the view it gave him of a faultlessly groomed patrician.

He was determined that this afternoon would end all quibbling and splitting of fine hairs. The fencing match had continued long enough: to-day he would tear the button from his foil and the mask from her eyes. Yet, the sound of the bell which announced her brought a sudden thrill which left him barely able to summon in time the ease of his light greetings.

She was in the pastel shade of green he had seen so often, which became her so well. As a distinct, new impression, he received again the effect she always produced, that of a virginal freshness, the fragrance of which overpowered an underlying miasma, an aura of decadence. And she was on her mettle. Inviting, daring as ever, still, whenever, with a quick thrust, he sought to steer the conversation from the channels of persiflage, she was ready with counter-attack, adroit equivocations. As the moments flew by proclaiming her victor, he resolved to employ less polished methods even if thereby he must risk an imputation of *gaucherie*. Alert, he awaited his next opportunity.

They were standing before the ostensible reason for her visit, the Pisaro, when she thanked him for the orchids she wore. Of a rare variety, their curled petals a pure white, they exhaled an exquisite perfume.

"They are like you," he told her, "their fragrance reaches me, faint, elusive, indistinct, like a half-sincere promise for a future which never comes."

A little too recklessly she threw back her head.

"But when you bury your face in them," she challenged, moving toward him so that as she spoke one of the flowers touched lightly the lapel of his coat, "their pungent sweetness suggests an abyss of riotous colors, and gor-

geous sounds comparable to nothing except—a future which never comes."

She was smiling, over-confident, ready to meet his expected retort with a facile shift. But of a sudden the smile froze into an expression of blank astonishment.

Without a word, without so much as the sound of a quick-drawn breath, he caught her to him in a brutal embrace which, even as he felt the tremour in her limp arms, amazed him. An emotion seized him utterly foreign to any he had before experienced throughout his long series of light loves. Despite the vehemence of the embrace, he felt himself stirred by something overwhelmingly strong,—solemn, majestic and sweet, which left him awe-stricken as he realized how little it was concerned with passion. That this woman, whom he had wanted more than he had realized, lay at last so passively in his arms, seemed like a miracle. A sense of possession,—but of a somewhat reverential possession,—that it was which rendered his eyes unseeing, and the lips seeking hers so white and cold.

But as he bent over her he felt in her inert arms a feeble resistance which surprised him, brought him back to himself, made him look long and searchingly into her upturned face, and reddened with anger as he looked.

Fear he saw there, and disgust, and a frantic longing for escape! Her wide-open eyes were darting here and there as if in frenzied search for some means of flight. And he knew that the lassitude he had thought meant surrender was nothing but a paralysis of fright.

A cold rage seized him. It seemed so inconceivably dastardly of this woman so to receive the first expression of all that he felt was fine in him. She had invited, she had tempted, and she had given glimpses of a nature he had deemed too cleanly to be tainted by the foul pettiness of the *demi-vierge*. And now she hung in his arms, resistless only because unnerved and benumbed by sickly fear.

Contemptuously he threw her from him with such force that she caught at

the mantel to prevent herself from falling. Yet, even as she steadied herself the color returned to her face, the smile to her lips, and relievedly she adjusted the laces at her throat.

"Uncouth manœuvres!" she purred, "quite—"

Something in his face silenced her for the moment, and just then a bell rang.

"Probably it's Mark," she resumed with perfect equanimity. "I told him I was taking tea with you, and asked him to call for me. He, too, you know, is most awfully fond of Pissaros. It was inconsiderate of you not to have included him in your invitation."

Hollis faced her. The anger in his face died out into an expression of bored weariness.

"So you're just another of these Hedda-women after all," he sneered. "How unspeakably tedious!"

Before the genuine contempt in his voice she flinched, for all her smile.

Yet, as Craig came into the room, she was sipping her tea quite undisturbedly. And as he approached her, Hollis saw her stretch out her arms to him in that gesture,—tender, suppliant, helpless, protective,—which he had thought so beautiful when, on the evening he first met her, he had seen it once before. And he noticed on her arm an ugly bruise where he had gripped her so forcefully.

"My dear Carolyn!" All sympathy, Craig bent over the slim hands, "what happened?"

"It was Hamlet," she answered lightly; "he bit me, the cur, when I tried to take away the bone I'd offered him. They say the tamest house pet grows savage when one tries to take away his bone."

"You're too reckless, dear," her husband expostulated; "these cross-breeds are unreliable. It was the mongrel asserting itself for all the Airedale blood."

"Not at all, Mark,"—her smile faded,—"it was the Airedale, the thoroughbred, administering a just punishment. You see, I had no right to try to take away his bone. Hurts a little, though.

Looks like a brand, doesn't it? But it will wear quickly away."

Then they considered the Pissaro, and talked desultorily for half an hour, the longest half hour Hollis ever went through.

It was a stupendous relief, when they left, to give way to the feeling of weakness and helplessness which swept over him. He felt sick, as if that afternoon he had penetrated into the soul of things, and come away nauseated with what he found there. That a woman should laugh at him hurt the vanity of the flaneur; but that a woman should misunderstand, and make mock of what he felt, even though it had manifested itself in the first embrace of a light intrigue, to be of the best in him, wounded something far deeper than pride. He felt the utter exhaustion he had felt once before, long ago, when the first golden illusion of youth faded mockingly away.

Yet, in the ensuing days, though his visits to the Craigs were discontinued, though he set about to answer the various tinted notes which had accumulated, and smoothly to resume the irregular routine of his existence, he was aware of an anxious expectancy which gladdened even as it angered him. When his mail was brought, when the telephone summoned him, when the door-bell rang, there came a fervid hope, and then an intense thud of disappointment to find that the message was not from her. For, despite the immutable opinion he fancied he had formed of her, and the scorn in which he held women of her ilk, a subtle, ineradicable remembrance of the sweetness of her smile, the graciousness of her gesture, called out for an explanation other than the one he had given himself. Hope he had always scorned as a profile view of despair,—a meretricious emotion of which pessimists are made. And yet it was in a state of hope that he lived now, day after day, eagerly seeking some other plausible interpretation of her conduct, unwilling, in spite of himself, to cast off as a sort of *fata morgana* the conception of her

he had formed before that unfortunate afternoon, unwilling to relinquish the *au delà* she had evoked.

So it was without any surprise that he heard her name announced one evening several weeks later. Only with difficulty could he hide his pleasure at the sight of her, weary-eyed and pale though she was.

"I've come to explain," she announced abruptly, ignoring his outstretched hand, and refusing the chair he brought forward.

She stood before him, her hands clasped at her breast, in an attitude which could not be termed a pose, so unconscious was it for all its effect of studied grace. Her eyes, full upon him, wavered, fell, and remained fixed, staring into nothingness as she continued in a lifeless monotone:

"You see, I was nineteen. They all begin their explanations in some such way, don't they? It's difficult always to avoid the usual. But, at any rate, I was nineteen and Mark was forty-five, five years older, Arnold, than you are now, and that was seventeen years ago—

"I didn't love him. I've never loved him. But he was very handsome, very brilliant, and very much the lion of the day, with all the women going mad over him, and vieing with one another for a few minutes' conversation with him. He paid no attention to me when first we met. And it hurt me, made me angry and reckless. I determined to make him do a great deal more than notice me, and—well, I fancy the gods grew angry at my impudence, and that's why they let me succeed.

"You know Mark. You know, too, how most artists have their secret ambition, whether for fame, or money, or women's hearts, or what not, and you know how, with him, an absolute love for his work leaves no room for other ambitions to creep in. He is so unassuming, so genial and gentle that, despite his brilliance, many people consider him an ordinary sort of an old fellow, greatly talented in a freakish sort of way, but commonplace otherwise.

You and I know that he is a splendid artist with a soul constructed on the same big lines as his genius. But I didn't,—when I was nineteen. I only knew that he was a man who had greatly wounded my vanity, and I made up my mind that, whether or not in holy matrimony, this man would come to my feet. And he did, so very quickly.

"I fancy that if I hadn't married him I might have become a very successful harlot. Men interest me, and I'm adaptable, you see,—able to assume the different attitudes different types require. That's the first essential for a profession damned as thorny only because so many potential parsons' wives rashly go in for it. I succeeded quickly with Mark.

"One day, Arnold,"—as she spoke, the deadness left her voice and it became richer and warmer than even he had imagined it ever could be, though her eyes remained cast down,—"one day, he took me in his arms, and asked me to marry him. I was surprised, delighted, all a-glow with the speedy triumph. I remember laughing when I hid my face on his shoulder, and told him yes. Then I felt his arms tremble, and I looked up into his face—

"It was blanched, Arnold. Even his lips had gone dead white. And there were tears in his eyes. That was the one time in my life that I've seen tears in a man's eyes. Solemn things, tears,—when they shine in men's eyes. And he was looking at me,—this great artist, this big, sweet soul,—at me, a scheming, shallow girl, with such helplessness, such tenderness, such reverential awe! It was a little the look of a neophyte taking his vows, a little the look of a Mahometan who sees for the first time a houri of paradise. I felt the enormity of what I'd done. It was terrorizing, agonizing. I couldn't but quail before it! That look burned its way straight through my mean little soul! It swayed my whole life.

"I think you know, don't you, that I've a rather poor opinion of my sex, and don't claim, either, to be the one 'different' woman, the one beautiful ex-

ception? As I told you once, we're a race of thick-skinned souls. But after I'd seen what was in his eyes that day, I couldn't bear to have him discover what dross he had considered gold. Mind you, I'm not saying that I was essential to his happiness; no woman is essential to such a man as he. Only during the first month or two was I the dominant passion of his life. Since then, there's been his work, and a few inconsequential affairs; he's no philanthropist. So it wouldn't really have mattered very much if I had failed him. That's the funny part of it all. I've never loved him, I'm not essential to him. It's not his love for me so much as his belief in my love for him that's come to mean something to him, that manifests itself in such implicit trust. Do you remember the night I first met you, when I was sitting so close to you as he came into the room? If your arms had been around me, I believe he'd just have looked questioningly at me, and accepted the most stupid of explanations. I suppose it affords excitement to some women thus to inspire a confidence, and hold it, even as they abuse it. But when one realizes that it's just an inverted sort of mesmerism, the domination by the weaker of the stronger, then all the zest goes out of it. I wanted so to—to play around a bit, but I remembered that look,—and couldn't! So I got me my ugly ducklings. I tried to fashion a scheme of things wherein I'd get all the—the tang out of life by playing only on the surface. It was that 'depths of the superficial' idea you've heard me prate about. But I didn't hurt the younglings, and they whiled away my time. So it went on for seventeen years.

"Then I met you,—and went mad! The nauseous streak finally asserted itself. It was so tremendously satisfying at last to give way to all the pent-up nastiness which showed itself in those sneaking, snaky, stupid methods of mine,—you remember? And I believed you were a dilettante, a *badineur de luxe*, with whom it would be possible to sort of skim over things, and fit them

in with my general scheme. That un-navigable stream I suggested,—I never dreamt that you'd seriously care whether you crossed it or not.

"That's all, except that I realize what I did was the meanest, cheapest way conceivable of finally showing the streak of alloy I'd been trying to hide, and that,—well, I admit freely that when you took me in your arms that day, for an instant I was wildly, tremendously happy. But immediately I saw him again, as he was seventeen years ago,—with the tears in his eyes! Don't laugh at me, please; don't sneer, and think all I've said was just a way of telling you I'm the Hedda-woman you thought me, scheming to win you back. I am making no excuses. I know none are possible. I know I played the poltroon. But, oh, Arnold,—that look of his! It was so indescribably beautiful, so unforgettable! I can't explain it, but when some woman saw it hundreds of years ago, she started the legend of a god of love who created man in his own image! He looked—"

For the first time since she had begun speaking she lifted her eyes to his,—eyes aglow with the warmth which had tinted her cheeks with rich crimson. And now, as they pierced his, he saw the glow suddenly die; he saw her turn pale; he saw surprise, then fear, then blank terror strike her, as in a strangling voice she gasped:

"He looked at me, Arnold, exactly as you are looking at me now!"

Through the silence which followed, she stood trembling as if in dread of something beautiful revealing itself at last. There was a long battle, during which all that had hitherto been best in the woman was slowly overpowered by the new, irresistible force it had itself brought forth. Finally the tension relaxed. Tears came to her eyes, a smile to her lips, and she swayed toward him, extending her slender hands in that lovely gesture of hers.

"You—you've forded the stream, Arnold." He could barely hear her broken whisper.

SAVED!

By William Drayham

IT was the end.

For three long weeks they had struggled to make it go. They had cut, padded, changed the business, reduced the prices of the orchestra seats, raised them again, given souvenirs and hired three distinct sets of supers for the mob scene. The leading man had worked himself thin, the star had sacrificed scenes to which she felt she was entitled, the author, the stage manager, and the heavy had cursed in four different languages every day. They had rehearsed every morning. The dramatic critics had given the play splendid notices. One had compared it favorably with G. B. S.'s best work. Another had compared G. B. S.'s best work unfavorably with it. A third had extolled it as vivid and dramatic beyond any play of the season, and another had nothing but praise for the cast.

All of no avail. The public would not come.

On this Saturday night they felt it was the end. There had not been fifty dollars in the house. After the performance the manager sadly called the company onto the stage. His silence was ominous.

The leading man vented the feelings

of all when he said, "Well, I suppose the jig's up?"

Too depressed to be grammatical, the manager could but respond with but a discouraged, "Yep, no use, folks. We close—"

He was interrupted by the entrance of the stage manager. Hair disheveled, collar torn, a wild light in his eyes, this worthy burst upon the stage like a cyclone. All present were petrified.

"What is it?" they exclaimed with one voice.

"Saved!" yelled the stage manager at the top of his voice. "Saved!"

"Whaddyemean saved?" said the manager excitedly.

The stage manager thrust a paper at him. The manager yelled and threw up his hat.

"What is it? What is it?" yelled the others, now as excited as he.

"Look!" was the reply. "Look! George Jean Nathan says the show is absolutely rotten! Wow! Hooray! You're all raised fifty a week. Don't tell me there's no such thing as Providence."

Weeping for joy, the star clasped her little granddaughter to her bosom.

"It will be a white Christmas, darling," she laughed through her tears.



THE trouble with marriage is that there is time for enough kisses.

THE PROPER THING

By Thyra Samter Winslow

THERE is something near magic about Palm Beach in February. It is almost unbelievable. The picture-book blue of the calm waters of Lake Worth, dotted with white yacht sails, a short walk along a palm-lined roadway, and then the ocean, white-capped and yet comfortably warm from the Gulf Stream, only a mile offshore; white sands, gay awning chairs, huge hotels containing all and many times the comforts of home and hundreds of happy, wonderfully dressed people in holiday mood, all go to make you feel as if you were in a fantastic fairyland. It is a joy to lie back on the sands and feel the sun beat against your body. It is a double joy to read in the Northern and Eastern papers about "the biggest blizzard in years, traffic delayed four hours by snow-storm." It makes you feel lazy and secure and self-satisfied, as if you had rubbed a magic lamp and created a little play-world of your own.

The Royal Poinciana was crowded as usual. It was filled nearly to its record "two thousand capacity." Millionaires from New York and west of New York, Real Society people, too real to be in the society column, were there, and Almost-real Society people, whose names and pictures appear in the society columns every week, pork people from Chicago, automobile people from Detroit, a few recently-rich movie people and just rich people, whom no one had ever heard of, the common rich people, who own good cars and homes and go South in Winter and East in Summer, who have several homely daughters or beautiful daughters and several restless sons and

who marry and multiply without getting the attention of anyone or anything except the man-of-the-family's trade journal. They were all there, and more, hundreds more, good people, bad people, clever people, stupid people, just people. And each day they played tennis and went in the surf and took drives and wheel chair rides and played golf on the too-smooth unexciting golf course and had luncheons and teas and dinners and gossiped and dressed and bought things in the shops in the hotels that they wouldn't have room to take back home and wouldn't know what to do with if they got them there, and the next day started to do the same things all over again.

In the morning, the Real Society girls, dressed in rather straggled skirts and middy blouses and large, poorly fitting tennis shoes, accompanied by adenoidous youths, also in bedraggled tennis clothes, started out. Near-Society people, clad in a bit more correct and a bit cleaner tennis clothes, played tennis, too. And the just rich people, dressed in shimmering silks and lustrous satins, wearing strands of pearls too big to be imitations and diamonds too prominently displayed to be beautiful, sat around on the broad verandas and wondered who folks were or walked along the palm-bordered walks or rode in wicker wheel chairs, pushed by eager colored boys, gay-colored silken parasols protecting their carefully cared for skin and hair from the sun.

But, because the Royal Poinciana, and even The Breakers, though much smaller, were quite democratic, everyone could talk and play with everyone else, although, of course, you didn't

have to, and didn't, always, as if it were a sort of a giant house-party, if there could be a house-party of thousands, even though a few months later, back in New York or Boston or even Chicago, a meeting would mean only a cool half-nod of recognition, or not even that, a blank stare of bewilderment.

"Maud, dear, didn't someone nod, then?"

"Did they, Mother? I didn't notice."

"I think it was that Miss, or was it Mrs. Blankership or Flanderberg or Effington or something like that, who was at The Breakers last March. Remember, she had a husband or a brother or somebody who rescued that little boy, or was it a little girl, from drowning. Remember?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, Mother. Was that her? It seems to me she had red hair and was shorter, but maybe you're right. Only wasn't her name Fleming or Henderson?"

But now, everyone was friendly and informal. Good fellowship was not even distantly acquainted with formality. You talked with the author of last year's successful comedy, "Money Flies," and golfed with an English cousin of Lord Somebody-or-other or maybe with Lord Somebody-or-other himself, and had tea with a lovely girl who was going to make her debut next year in Sioux Falls. She had intended going back to school this year, but her eyes weren't strong and Mother thought this change would be good for her, of course Father couldn't leave the bank, but Mother was along.

The old people, though nobody admits being old these days, sat on wicker furniture on the broad porches or rode in wheel chairs or shopped and the younger people played all day and in the evening everybody danced and invented new steps and wore out evening clothes and were quite happy in a simple, informal, democratic way. Oh, yes, as long as you had money, quite a lot of money, of course, and acted the right way and all that, you were quite

as good as anyone else at Palm Beach, while you were there.

Mrs. Joseph Conroy Elliott, accompanied by her daughter, Jeanne Van Souper Elliott and her maid, Barton, all of New York, arrived at The Royal Poinciana one morning early in February. You could read their names on the register if you cared about it. They had wired, of course, for rooms and were assigned a large suite, with a lovely view of Lake Worth.

The hotel was crowded as they entered, accompanied by half a dozen of the always-waiting colored boys, eager for something to carry. Usually, new arrivals look rather out-of-sorts and it is fun to snicker at their appearance, after their days of travelling. These arrivals didn't. They were fresh-looking, correct.

Mrs. Joseph Conroy Elliott was a small, frightened-looking little woman, with a round, motherly face and graying hair worn in a rather stiff following of fashion. She arrived attired in a correct black travelling frock with severe but correct embroidered cuffs and collar. Miss Jeanne Van Souper Elliott wore a dark blue frock with a touch of French embroidery at the throat. She carried Toodles, a tiny Pom, with a black plumed tail and bead eyes. Behind them, in correct maid's travelling attire, came Barton.

They made quite an impression, even in a hotel where every industry king's daughter has a maid and where Pomeranians and Belgian Griffins and Chows were more common than terriers and poodles. There was something so perfectly proper, so perfectly correct about the Elliotts. The Near-society people rushed with quite undisguised eagerness to the register. They didn't know the names, but, then, they sounded quite distinguished enough for anyone. The ordinary rich folks in their wonderful gowns of imported laces strolled to the register, too, but they had never heard of the Joseph Conroy Elliotts, and, if questioned, they would have admitted reading the society magazines every week. Even

the Real Society people, languid of eye and poorly dressed, looked, but they had never heard of the Elliotts, either.

Mrs. Elliott and Miss Elliott did not appear at dinner the first night. Those who thought about it didn't expect them to. The trip is a hard one and it was the proper thing not to, anyway. Dinner was served in their rooms, and breakfast, too. Their trunks came, quite a formidable and proper number, though not too many, either, shoe trunks, hat trunks, accessory trunks and large, packing-box-sized wardrobe trunks. Barton, assisted by one of the hotel maids, unpacked.

"They've got mighty fine things," that maid told the other maids, below stairs, later, "nothing loud or cheap, but satins and silks and soft things for the old lady and perfectly grand things and evening clothes, too, that are mighty fine, for the young girl. Mrs. Vernon Castle has nothing on her."

"Maybe it is Mrs. Castle," said one.

"No, it ain't," said another. "She's a lot thinner and this Miss Elliott's hair ain't short, either. Everything about them looks just about all right."

At eleven the morning after their arrival, the Elliotts appeared on the hotel veranda. Mrs. Elliott wore white linen, perfectly tailored. She carried a volume of Henry James. Jeanne Elliott wore a correct morning costume of pale blue linen, with a touch of rose here and there. Her hair was smoothed in exactly the correct way, and her morning hat was lined with old rose that threw wonderful shadows on her pale gold hair and lovely soft skin. She looked as if she had stepped from the frontispiece of the latest number of *Vogue*.

Jeanne Van Souper Elliott looked around in a well-bred, correct way, found a comfortable rocker for her mother and dropped on a low stool at her mother's feet. She had a book, too, by that writer of romantic fiction, Ronald E. Hallingham, who writes so familiarly about New York society, and entitled "The Conqueror." In spite of its romantic love scenes and its descrip-

tion of a bal masque, committees on reading of various woman's clubs had decided that it was a perfectly proper book for young girls to read.

Jeanne had read but a few moments when a girl, on her way to the tennis court, stopped, embarrassed, and said:

"Would you like to play tennis?"

Jeanne rose to her feet. The tiniest blush came over her features. The book slipped to the floor. She picked it up, blushed again and put it on the stool.

"Oh, yes, I—I adore tennis," she said.

The girl who asked her to play belonged to the Almost-real society set. Her shoes were almost clean, her mid-dy only a few years old. Her hair was disheveled and tied with a windsor tie. You would have thought her a laborer's daughter, probably, but her grandfather had made his money in lumber, over a generation ago.

Jeanne joined the group at one of the tennis courts. She said the proper thing when she was introduced. She played a good game of tennis, not a corking good game, not a professional game, but just a good, well-trained game. She knew the rules and could serve well and return well, as if she had had a course in tennis playing.

The other rather liked her. After the game she was neither disheveled nor warm looking. On the contrary, she looked prettier than ever. A soft lock of pale hair blew across her face. Her eyes were bright, her soft skin a trifle pink and moist.

"I don't understand her," said Edna Randolph, later, to her suitor, a tall, too-thin boy with a head a trifle too large, "she's so odd and much, much too proper."

"Does look a bit as if she wasn't quite real," agreed William Trainer, IV, "but she's quite a looker, isn't she?"

After the game, Jeanne joined her mother and the two went to their rooms. Later, Jeanne, clad in the most correct of bathing suits, stylish but most modestly cut, and chaperoned by her mother and accompanied by Barton,

who carried her beach cape, went to the beach. Hundreds of bathers were in the surf. Hundreds of others, in far too elegant bathing suits to venture into the water, sat on the warm sands. Jeanne could swim. She could do the breath stroke and the crawl and could float and paddle. It was most correct swimming. She met other people in the water and spoke to them, after they had addressed her, in most correct, even tones.

After the swim she went to her room for a nap and luncheon. Later in the afternoon, she and her mother went for a short wheel chair ride and then had tea in the gardens.

For dinner and dancing, Jeanne came down dressed in a tiny butterfly of a frock of palest green gauze, a mere wisp of a dress, yet quite discreet and girlish and absolutely correct. She had all of her dances taken and she knew all of the new dances. She looked well dancing them, too, she had been carefully taught and was slender and graceful. William Trainer, IV, and Glaswell Haskins and Milner Shredding, as well as Edna Randolph and Dorothy Filson and Susan Flint and other representatives of real society, agreed that she was quite a girl, well trained and well brained, a thoroughbred. Only, they agreed, too, there was something, an odd something, a trifle too much perfection, perhaps, a something that they did not have. And the common rich in their brilliant colored chiffon gowns, cut too low, their wonderful coiffures and still more wonderful jewels, wondered who she was. There was something different about her.

"How do you like your new friends?" Mrs. Elliott asked Jeanne, later, as Barton brushed out her soft, pale hair. Jeanne frowned. The tiniest crease in the world appeared between her lovely eyes.

"I like them," she said, in her soft, low, little voice, "but, Mother, they are so, well, almost rude and coarse, and— and rather incomplete, aren't they?"

"They seemed quite nice to me," said Mrs. Elliott.

"Oh, they are quite nice," agreed Jeanne, "only," and she sighed, "they are either over-dressed—or not dressed well at all, aren't they? Dorothy Filson, and she's the daughter of the Brewster Filsons, Mother, wore terrible-looking clothes playing tennis, and her hair looked, well, quite a mess to-night, sort of—unbrushed, Mother, and Mr. Trainor's collars don't fit very well and his hair is sort of thin on top, already, and he's quite young. And—and Mr. Haskins talks rather—abruptly, and none of them say anything witty or quick or clever. And yet they are quite the nicest ones here, people I've heard of. The others here, hundreds and hundreds of others, why they are awful. A few look nice, but they talk so, well, almost incorrectly, Mother. And the rest wear *cr pe de Chine* and silk frocks in the morning instead of linen, and even the real young girls had on diamonds and some had on satin slippers before luncheon, and in the evening their clothes were, well, extreme, it seems to me. And they were so loud and, and funny, don't you think so? It doesn't seem quite right, Mother, somehow."

And even when she was asleep, in a gauzy French nightie, covered with the softest of embroidered coverlets, Jeanne still frowned, a tiny, hardly discernible frown of annoyance.

The days went on as they had begun, full days, days of tennis and golf and bathing, of horseback riding, of dancing, of sailing, of strolls. Jeanne did everything in quite the proper way. She wore correct little frocks, she answered softly, politely, even cleverly, putting bits of quotations and allusions, quite proper ones, into her conversation.

"She's a bully girl, but quite too formal or proper or something," agreed the people she met at the hotel.

"Of course the people here are quite splendid," confessed Jeanne to her mother, "and I think I've been fortunate in getting to know the nicest ones, but they are so odd, I think. You know I told you the Ordhams were here, only I hadn't met them. Yester-

day, an awful-looking man, in greasy trousers and not any tie, was ordering around some nice-looking men in clean white sailor suits, they were working on that new yacht in Lake Worth, and Mother, to-day I met him, and found out that that awful messy-looking boy was Van Ordham and the nice men were only mechanics or sailors or something. And those two Starring girls who wanted me to go on the sailing party and who wear such wonderful imported clothes and act so haughty, their father made his money just last year, and they say 'was' for 'were,' sometimes, and 'those kind.' Things seem sort of mixed up, Mother, don't they? Everyone seems to have such, well, careless manners, too."

Then, one day, a new man arrived, a tall man with shoulders just the proper degree of broadness. His hair was dark, almost raven, tossed back from, yes, you might even call it a noble brow. His mouth and chin were stern, yet kind, and his eyes a sort of liquid yellow-brown. A valet, the proper distance behind, carried his bags and travelling coat. Rooms had been reserved by telegraph. In the register he wrote "William E. Baker and man, New York."

The New-society folks and the common rich folks and even the Real Society folks, making only the vaguest pretence at concealing their emotions and their motives, looked at the register. No one had ever heard of William E. Baker.

William E. Baker arrived in the morning. An hour later, attired in the most correct of masculine bathing suits, he went for a swim. In the afternoon, in correct golfing costume, he played eighteen holes, and he played well, with perfect correctness and precision. The other men, those in dirty golf clothes and those in too-elegant flannels, felt vaguely annoyed at him.

That night, at the dance, Jeanne, dressed in the daintiest of white chiffon, and William E. Baker, in well-fitting Are-you-going-South-for-the-Winter evening clothes, were introduced.

Jeanne gave a little gasp and dropped her eyes. He was the sort of man she had dreamed of. She was almost afraid that he wasn't real and hesitated before raising her eyes to look at him again. A tiny blush, a mere hint of a delicate pink, went over her face and throat. William E. Baker, with the most correct manner in the world, bent over her hand and expressed his pleasure at the introduction.

The music seemed wonderful that night. They danced together of course. Jeanne felt that never before had she had such a perfect dancing partner. Baker knew all of the steps just as she did, and he danced them absolutely correctly. Baker, for his part, thought that no one could dance as well as Jeanne did, and told her so. He hadn't even thought that there was anyone in the world like her, for that matter. Others, looking at them, agreed that they seemed perfectly suited to one another. There was something strange about both of them, yet they were both correct and flawless and proper. Even the girls who had cast admiring glances at William E. Baker's smooth hair and perfect profile and the men who had admired the daintiness and fragrance of Jeanne agreed that, perhaps, after all, the two were the best suited.

The dance was the beginning. Palm Beach, with its lights, its music, its gayety, its avenues of palms, its calm lake, its pleasant ocean, seemed wonderfully well suited for them. Jeanne and Baker played tennis together the next morning, both in immaculate tennis clothes. They had luncheon at The Breakers, correctly chaperoned by Mrs. Elliott, who wore grey linen. In the afternoon, they went for a ride, accompanied by Barton and Baker's man. Jeanne looked adorable in riding clothes, tight knickers, long coat, tan boots and a tiny, impudent riding hat. Baker, too, looked well in his immaculate riding suit.

"Tell me, are you real or are you only a phantom?" asked Baker.

"I'm quite real, Big Man," answered Jeanne. "I'm the realest thing that I

know about, only since you are here—"

"Are you glad that—that I'm here?" asked Baker, and he drove quite close to her.

"If you want me to be, I'll be glad, though I believe that I would be, anyhow," Jeanne told him.

In the evening they danced.

They spent long, delicious days together, days full of swims and dances, of motor trips down to Fort Lauderdale, "twilight teas" in the Royal Poinciana gardens, luncheons at the Houseboat, dinners at the hotels or the Beach club, sails, strolls along the palm-bordered paths, days full of repartee and quotations and correct clothing.

The others at the hotel looked on, agreed that they were ideally suited, and waited.

One night on the broad veranda, he proposed. There was a full moon and a rippled path of silver on the water. Mrs. Elliott was watching the dancers and only a few couples, strolling a goodly number of feet away, were near them. It was a perfect night for a proposal.

"Jeanne, dear," said Baker, though the "dear" was almost a whisper, "do you love me—a little—now? Could you learn, ever? I want you to—marry me. Will you, dear?"

Jeanne sighed. She was wearing an adorable frock, almost a creation, of palest of pale pink, with just a touch of silver on the bodice.

"I, I don't know," murmured Jeanne.

"Don't you, don't you love me? You haven't been flirting with me, have you?"

Baker cupped her delicately rounded chin in his hand and turned her face so that the moon shone down on it.

"No, I haven't been flirting, I—"

"Say it."

"I—do—love—you, but, oh—"

"What is the matter?"

"I must tell you something. I have a confession to make. If you knew—"

"A confession? What is it? Tell me."

"It's, oh, maybe you won't love me

any more—then. It's—it's hard to tell you."

"Go on. Is there—has there been—some one else?"

"No, I've never cared for anyone—but you."

"You do care, then nothing else matters. There is no one else."

"But it does matter. You are so perfect, so correct. If you knew—"

"Me? Perfect? Correct? It's you that's perfect and correct, little dear."

"That's it. I'm not what I seem. I'm—"

"Oh, I know. Is it that you've been trying to pretend that, oh, is it that you are poor, dear? That needn't worry you. I have money enough for both of us."

Jeanne laughed, a faint echo of a laugh, with a sad little ending.

"I'm not poor. I'm—rich—really. It's not that."

"What is it then? Tell me!"

"It's that I'm not really—anybody. I'm not a—society girl. You thought I was, didn't you?"

"Yes, I thought so, of course. You always did things just the right way, the proper way. What do you mean, you're not anybody?"

"Why, I don't belong to a real set at all. I'm nobody. I'm from Oklahoma, from a little town called Tulsa."

"I don't understand."

"Why, it's hard to tell you. Don't you see, we lived there and Dad made a lot of money in oil and so I went away to school and then abroad and learned things—and I read a lot, too. I didn't want to deceive you. I wanted to be a—a real girl who belonged to things, who was in society. I tried to be like one, like those I read about in stories. I took lessons in everything, dancing and swimming and riding and things, and practiced how to talk, even."

"Dad's name was just plain Joe Elliott, but the Joe meant Joseph and sometimes he signed it J. C., and his mother's name was Conroy, so I made him sign the whole thing—Dad's still in Oklahoma—and I made up the Van Souper for a middle name, I didn't have

any, and I used to spell my name just J-E-A-N.

"But, I—I wanted to do the right things. I read all sorts of authors to find out what to do. I read books by Ronald E. Hallingham. His heroines were always so beautiful, and sweet, his heroes so—so noble. They always did the proper thing. I wanted to be like them, like real society people. I never had a chance to meet people or anything. So we got a maid in New York, and clothes and things and came here. I tried to do the proper thing, only people here don't, somehow. They don't act the way they should. They don't have manners and things, like the people in the Hallingham books, until you came. Here, folks whom I've read about, who count, don't care how they look or what they say, or they are terrible, over-dressed things, and people that you never hear about at all do the same things, only they all over-dress and act loud and—funny. But you, you're just like the heroes. You do the proper thing all the time—and now—you—love—me and I have to tell you that I'm—an—impostor. I'm nothing at all." Jeanne drew from apparently nowhere at all a dainty bit of a handkerchief and dabbed her eyes with it.

Baker stood up, sat down again even closer and put out a firm, well-manicured hand. He patted her soft hair quite gently.

"Is that all, little dear?"

"All? Isn't it just terrible?"

"There, there," he said. "Please don't cry, it's all right, really it is. I have a confession to make, too. I'm

not really what you think I am, either."

"Why, you are really somebody important, somebody in Society, aren't you? You said you were rich, just now. I don't know what you've got to confess—" She started crying again. "Is—is it a—a black—past?"

"No, not that," said Baker. "You see," he coughed, and began again, "you see, this is my first attempt at things social, too. Just hired my man in New York and thought I'd try it. It seems I've overdone the manners and clothes quite a bit. I thought this was the way it was done. Never had a chance to try it before, either. We seem to be confessing the same thing. You see, I used to be poor. I've made a lot of money, lately. I'm a writer, and I—I wanted to do the proper thing, too. Don't you see, it's all right?"

His arm went around her, very gently. She stopped sobbing, rather suddenly, snuggled a bit closer and looked up at him. The moon shone on both their faces.

"But—it's funny," said Jeanne, "how did you know how to do the proper thing, if people don't act that way? Did—did you read Hallingham, too?"

He cupped her face in his hand again and kissed her. "You dear," he said, and kissed her again.

"But how?" persisted Jeanne.

"Oh, well, my real name is Baker, but I didn't think it was a good name for a writer, too plain, so I didn't sign it to my books." He took another kiss. "Don't you see, little dear, I'm—why—I'm Ronald E. Hallingham."



TO a woman, marriage means that thereafter she will only have to deceive one man.



JAPANESE FANTASTICS

By Heroichiro Myderco

I

THE GHOST OF LOVE

IT was such a warm spring evening that the monk's finger-tips tingled with some forgotten passion, like the twigs of a tree with a faint promise of bud. He could not find any temple or tavern nearby, so he stopped under a tree and slept there for the night.

At about midnight, he was aroused from his sleep by the sound of a woman's voice. Lo! A beautiful maiden was caressing him most tenderly. Even after the day dawned the light pressure of her palm was still clinging to his arm. . . .

The monk examined the moss-clad stone he had used for a pillow. . . . It was a woman's skull.

II

AFTERWARD

SHE came one day over the hill and watched the sea and the white sand by the cherry-tree.

The butterflies played on her sleeves no more; her kimono was dark and humble now.

Here was the spot where he had declared his love. There was the turf where she sat listening to his musical voice.

The same cranes circled over the pine, and the sea was as blue as ever.

With haunting memories of the trysting place of yore she wept bitterly. Life was cruel to her.

For now she was married to him who had loved her.

III

A CHINESE PICTURE

THE golden mangoes are heavy on their boughs, and the silver branches of the garden swing like vapourous tapestry.

Over the wall a plaintive music flows through the noonday heat of the poppy-field.

Li Chee, the poet, lays down his opium-pipe and muses with a melancholy smile.

They are burying some rich merchant's wife. Who knows, in all the vast Kingdom, that she died for love of the poet?



THE celebrity of ancient Ithaca is easily understood: a grass-widow was faithful there.



WOMAN is like a shadow. Pursue her, she runs. Run from her, she pursues.

THE HAWTRY BOY

By Caroline Stinson Burne

IT was the summer that Theora James and the Hawtry boy did *not* make history. (For history is invariably a record of results.) Perhaps it was poetry that they made instead! Anyway, you can judge that for yourself. It depends on the point of view.

Theora had gone to stay for several weeks with the Buxton Murfrees at their small perfectly appointed camp on a tiny island set in the lake which the Indians formerly likened to the Smile of the Great Spirit. And that was just before—but one must not anticipate. Mrs. Buxton Murfree treated Theora with an affectionate, flattering air, as though she were fearfully and wonderfully made. And the Murfree girls, Lisa and Clover, looked her over appraisingly, questioningly, wonderingly and enviously on her arrival; and then continued to do so! Sometimes Theora would find Mrs. Buxton Murfree regarding her with a fixed, watchful stare. And it made Theora uncomfortable. She would turn the ring once around that she wore on the index finger of her slim left hand. It was set with a huge, vividly blue Montana sapphire hedged about by twenty-one small diamonds. When Theora turned it around gravely and deliberately, it had the effect of being the performance of a rite. She might have been crossing herself!

It was the very morning after she had arrived at the Buxton Murfrees' pseudo-primitive retreat. Theora was standing out on one of the rough boulders that jut out above the clear waters of the lake. Theora was slim and pale and given to wearing touches of vivid color. Her small features wore an expression of passive sombreness. She looked as though she thought that noth-

ing interesting ever had or ever could happen to her. All but her eyes. They alone seemed to know of exquisite and terrible possibilities. It was then that the Hawtry boy's rakish snow-white boat shot out from the small pier across the lake and came straight toward her over the "sky-blue water." The launch had very little beam anywhere, but at the prow it was pointed like an arrowhead and it cut the water into two silver-green fountains. The Hawtry boy was standing up by the engine, the brass parts of which had caught the sunlight and flashed almost as brightly as the Hawtry boy's smile. He smiled easily. The wind blew the hair back from his very much tanned forehead, and his blue eyes, the same vivid, startling blue as Theora's Montana sapphire, looked with a direct, straight-from-the-shoulder kind of a glance right into hers. Theora caught his smile and tossed it back at him. She was like a somber pool of water suddenly rippled by a light wind, and flashing back the sunlight at a thousand angles. She flung out her slim arms happily in a little gesture of abandon—or was it welcome? At any rate, it seemed as though the Hawtry boy sailed straight into them. Moreover, from that moment the Hawtry boy never pretended to be anything but head over ears in love with Theora. He was too honest a boy. But he had a code, wonderfully simple, but wonderfully inflexible. Of the code, more will be told.

After this he came every day and every evening. The Murfree girls, Lisa and Clover, referred to him as the Royal Slave, and said that "he really ought to be told—if Theora *hasn't*." They had planned to annex themselves from

the start. But Mrs. Buxton Murfree told them that he was 'only a boy,' and that it didn't matter. And she looked on with her watchful stare that changed to a fixed smile when you caught her at it. So the Hawtry boy continued to come. It was a rough channel of water, when the wind blew, that divided the island from the shore where the Hawtry boy's people had a camp. Theora called it the Hellespont because the boy used to swim it every morning at ten o'clock, which was the time at which Theora took her morning dip. She waved a Turkish towel from the beach, and, being dark, played the role of Hero in a scarlet silk swimming suit. The Murfree girls said she was so thin that she resembled nothing so much as a penny firecracker when she popped off the end of the springboard in it! The Hawtry boy, of course, thought otherwise.

Mrs. Buxton Murfree made Theora "rest" every afternoon for two hours, telling her with an arch smile that she "must take care of her roses." In spite of this, the girl's skin was more transparent than ever and her eyes had an inscrutable light shining out from their somberness.

"I don't believe she's grateful at all—for *anything*," said Mrs. Buxton Murfree once, as she looked at the girl with a kind of curious wonder, quite impersonal. It was entirely beyond Mrs. Buxton Murfree's imagination to conceive of any girl in Theora's position not being riotously happy and exultant. "Later she'll appreciate what I'm doing for her," she said self-righteously. But she wondered if, after all, it would not have been a better plan to let the girl stay on at the boarding school after it closed? She could have shopped and gone to the summer shows and amused herself quite as well. And Mrs. Buxton Murfree would not have been responsible for the queer little thing!

Once when the pine woods were beginning to blacken against a rare, purplish sky and the wind had died, Theora James and the Hawtry boy sat together on the driver's seat of the speed

boat. They always sat just that way. The Hawtry boy facing the engine and Theora, with a cushion tucked into the hollow of her back, facing aft, so that they were, as Meredith translates, "face in face." This was one of the inviolable conventions of the boat. There were several. Some of them were rather absurd. One was that Theora should never disembark from the white boat without lingering an extra minute on the Murfrees' stone pier to say, smiling a little:

"Will you kiss me good-night just as soon as you make the landing at your own pier?"

And the Hawtry boy would gravely reply, "Yes." Then as he was about to push off across the lake once more.

"Will you?"

"Yes," Theora would smile.

"Don't forget, will you?"

"Don't *you* forget!"

"Well, you can just believe I won't," he would answer earnestly.

And so they were happy in a childish, nonsensical way that would have utterly disgusted older and wiser people. The boy sometimes wondered, but he had infinite faith. When the time came, he would take what the Gods gave. And Theora shut her eyes to her destiny and played at Make-Believe with feverish abandon. Only, sometimes the thought of Real Life waiting just around the corner to seize her overcame Theora, and she would plan daring methods of escape for herself. Gratitude and Duty were as nothing now. She knew that for the first time she loved. Oh, if she could only cheat this once, she would play square ever afterwards!

And it was in a mood like this that the girl watched the boy priming the engine. He kept turning little screws and levers and seemed to caress the glancing, shining thing. But Theora's look was more on him than on his work. He glanced around at her once, and gave his attention to the engine again. Then he turned it over and it sprang into life at his touch. Theora sat very still for a few minutes. The island was

far astern of them. There was nothing human near them. They were alone in this land of the sky with only the spir-its of wood and water. Suddenly Theora stood up in the boat. There was a kind of resolute look in her face. She laid her hand on the boy's shoulder lightly for an instant, but he was bending over the machinery again. Then she went to the stern of the boat, balanced lightly a moment, and dived. It was a very good dive.

He stopped the engine and had dragged her out before she had taken three strokes. A moment later she was in the boat streaming lake water and tears against his blue sweater, a pitiful Undine. He was murmuring all sorts of things to her. "And you might—you might have been caught in the propeller," he shuddered. She replied with a hysterical little laugh.

"Tell me—would you have cared?" she asked, and held her breath. The world and all the stars must have stood still while she waited.

"Theora—how can you ask me that?" The boy was very white. But even then he did not say "I love you." That was part of the code. It was the code of most honorable men. How could he say "I love you," unless he could add, in good faith, "I want you for my wife"? And the Hawtry boy knew that he could not do that—not yet.

When they went back to the island that night she told him that she was going away in two days. Her visit was to end then. He looked sad and thoughtful at the news. Then he brightened. Couldn't she and *wouldn't* she be a guest at his own camp? His mother would invite her the next day. But Theora shook her head. She had made different plans, she told him. And, no, they could hardly be changed.

"The old boat and I are going to be awfully lonesome for the rest of the summer," he remarked gravely. Theora suggested Lisa and Clover with malicious intent.

"No other girl is ever going to ride in this boat!" said the Hawtry boy with marked firmness. Then he began

to plan for trips into town in the fall—fraternity house dances and football games that they must attend together. Theora was rather silent. She was full of the philosophy of Omar just then. But she sighed a little. She longed to tell the boy everything and ask him to take her away from it all. But she found she was incapable of this. Perhaps she lacked faith. And all her training had tended to make her a fatalist. Other people had always arranged things for her. Nothing had ever just happened.

A northwest wind blew steadily all of the following day and lashed the lake until it looked as if it had been mixed with white of egg. The new-made surf hammered the rocks which hemmed in the little island and huge waves licked around the roots of the trees. Theora clung to a rough timber post which supported the verandah roof and looked out across the Hellespont. She turned the Montana sapphire on her index finger at intervals. All the while her thoughts flew back and forth across the turbulent channel. One minute she was praying for him not to come, the next, fiercely wishing in her heart that he would.

At the end of an hour or so of watching, the Hawtry boy dragged himself slowly out of the water. He shook the spray from his eyes, then sank on the beach rather exhaustedly. He smiled up at Theora.

"I know it was a fool thing to do—grandstand play and all that. But it's your last day," he said simply. She took a wisp of handkerchief from the patch pocket of her sport skirt and bent above him as she endeavored to dry his face. That afternoon the wind continued. It did not die with the sun, but whipped itself into a fiercer gale. Mrs. Buxton Murfree first advised the Hawtry boy not to swim back across the Hellespont, then later she half-heartedly asked him to stay the night with them, and when he accepted with simple politeness, she quite frigidly placed some of the late Mr. Buxton Murfree's clothes at his disposal. Mr. Murfree

had been plump and fussy. The Hawtry boy was athletically slim and, some people said, *too* tall. That evening at dinner he appeared in a remarkably short dinner jacket and checked trousers that barely covered the extremities of his clocked silk hose. But the Hawtry boy was happy and unembarrassed. He was to have a few more precious hours with Theora! So he gravely drew out Mrs. Buxton Murfree's chair for her, and scrupulously made conversation with her and with Lisa and Clover at intervals throughout dinner. All the rest of the time he looked at Theora.

That night the wind still rushed through the trees which lashed at each other, and the waves slapped angrily at the passive shores of the lake. The moon was tossed from one cloud to another and only gleamed fitfully on the black Northern woods and the silver-steel waters. Theora could hear her heart pounding with a steady, dull beat above the roar of the wind as she slipped out into the night, a mackinaw thrown on over her dressing gown. She knew the little porch room well. She had occupied it herself before. Tonight the Hawtry boy had chosen it, saying that he could not sleep indoors any more. But she knew that he had given up the indoor guest room to her on account of the storm. The moon was wrapped in a thick gray cloud, so Theora felt her way in the dark, carefully, for she did not wish to waken the Hawtry boy. The moon emerged serenely. Theora caught her breath. There was the youthful, inert figure of the boy, lying on the camp cot, one arm flung over his head in a reposeful gesture. He might have been a modern representation of the young god Thanatos. Or, in that ghostly light, with his quiet, composed look and pale, regular features, the boy might almost have been—dead. Theora felt that superstitious thrill that people oftentimes have when they look on the sleeping form of someone loved. For is not Sleep the twin brother of Death? Theora crept nearer and then knelt by the rigid little camp cot, full of the deep longing of

youth. And in the slim form of the boy stretched on the cot was all the tragedy and pathos of youth, the eagerness, the crudities, the high white ideals, the naïveté, the poignancy of its joys and sorrows, the lonesomeness of youth—the queer sensitiveness, the recklessness, the loveliness of youth! And then the clouds darkened everything again.

Theora knew that no chance sound could be heard above the wind and water. So she went over to the window that gave on Mrs. Buxton Murfree's room, and, hating what she did, tapped sharply with the stone of her ring against the window pane. A few minutes later a pocket electric lamp was flashed in her face. She was confronted by a tall figure in flowing draperies.

"Well?" she said with a well-simulated gasp of surprise. "Well?"

"Theora!" It was from the Hawtry boy. He had waked up. "You must have walked in your sleep," he added in a puzzled tone. Mrs. Buxton Murfree smiled her set smile.

"Of course, poor child, you've walked in your sleep." She hissed the words out softly, yet as though from unfathomed depths of amused contempt.

"You may tell whom you please! I —*came* out here! I wanted to come—tell—whom you please." Theora began defiantly, ended almost imploringly. Mrs. Buxton Murfree only said soothingly and with her watchful stare, "Come, dear." Theora gave a dry sob and went. She knew now that she had played a losing game from the start. There was to be no escape for her! Well, she supposed this woman had been paid for it all along. She looked back at the Hawtry boy again. He was sitting up in the camp cot, his hair rumped stiffly, the sleep still in his eyes. He looked like pictures of children on Christmas morning. He seemed about to call after her, but he didn't.

The next day Theora went to the train. The Hawtry boy accompanied

her to the station and Mrs. Buxton Murfree stood on the platform. So did the Murfree girls, Lisa and Clover. They were telling each other that "he'd know soon, *now*." The Hawtry boy boarded the train, carrying her bag and her week-end box. In the long mahogany passage at the entrance to the Pullman she turned and flung an arm about the Hawtry boy. The porter, a *café au lait* colored person, paused with a bright impersonal look. He was used to the mahogany passage.

They had kissed. "I'll write," he said. "Only two more years at New Haven, you know. After that—" He choked. She smiled at him sadly.

"Good-bye. I love you—ineffably," she murmured.

The man in the first seat, who had the large ear-trumpet, could not hear all this, but he smiled in amused tolerance.

His idea of tragedy was of the varieties mentioned in the Litany.

It was the following week that the Hawtry boy saw her picture in *Town and Country*. He never read those things, but someone had "told" him. He read through the account of her marriage to Courtland Riever, the "well-known clubman." Details followed as to his probable income and the ramifications and social connections of his "old" family. His bride was not mentioned except to say that she was beautiful and an orphan. "He educated her, you know. Sent her abroad and everything. Her father was a college friend of his," said Clover and Lisa together. "Mamma has known Mr. Riever for years," Clover added.

Theora wondered every day of her married life how the Hawtry boy had "taken it."



FLOTSAM

By John H. Nevill

WHEN the crowded, plunging life-boat staggered away, Grace Kerwood Bates saw her preacher-husband and that abominable creature, whom he so fervently condemned, clinging to the same bit of wreckage.

Fifteen years later, when Grace Kerwood Fiske and her millionaire husband left their yacht to visit a beckoning, tropical isle, they encountered a sweet-faced, bronzed woman huddling beside a savage, bearded brute. A dozen naked, sun-browned babies looked on wonderingly.



A MAN'S first love is pure and his last is lasting. It is the ones in between that make the cynics.



A SPINSTER is only half a woman. She is devoid of the predatory instinct.

NO, THANK YOU!

By Elsbeth Murphy

HE met her; she met him. He took a fancy to her blonde curls; she was infatuated with his swarthy coat of tan. He fell for dimples; she had dimples. She idolized Greek gods; he was a Herculean Apollo. She played raggy ragtime; he doted on popular music. He read light fiction; she read light fiction. She danced divinely; he danced divinely. He smoked Pall Mall; she smoked Pall Mall. He liked blue; she always wore blue. She liked wee moustaches; he wore a wee moustache. She preferred a well-groomed man; he was perfectly attired. He desired daintiness in women; she was the essence of peach blossoms. He loved parties; she loved parties.

They married—yes, each other. He hated the city; she loved the country. He wanted a bungalow; she wanted a bungalow. He liked meat well done; she liked meat well done. He liked good biscuit; she saw that the cook made good biscuit. She adored icy jewels; he lavished his wealth on diamonds for her. He had eyes for her alone; she was conscious that no other man existed. She wished the boy named John; he wanted the boy named John. And it was ever thus.

Ah, how terribly tragic 't would be if the course of true love should run smooth!!



THE CURIOUS MAN

By Lars Rue

I WANT to know intimate gossip about people. I want to be possessed of the family secrets of everyone. I want to be authority on the subject of why Elaine left her husband and on what grounds Arabella will endeavor to get a divorce. I want to explore family closets for ghosts of past naughty conduct.

I want to be able to call on rich widows or some youthful ingénue at unearthly hours of the night or day without exciting talk from the neighbors. I want to be able to call on Billy's wife without arousing his jealous suspicions. I wish to hear from Hortense's own lips about her escapades with the Italian violinist. I want to be a doctor.



THE SIEGE OF SIR LIONEL

By Elinor Maxwell

FOR seven hours straight the rain had beaten against the car windows, wildly and persistently, and then, with lovely sloshing sounds, the train began to ease along the track in at least a foot of water. "Good Lord!" exclaimed Jim, looking out the window. "This is Noah's Ark for fair! If you'll believe papa, Katrine, there's nothing to meet the naked eye as far as one can see but quarts and quarts of water."

"Well," I murmured, "I always have been verra, verra fond of motor-boating!"

"Motor-boating," repeated Tevis, a scared look in her eyes as our car suddenly appeared to be oozing into the earth, "Motor-boating! My dear! Not since I crossed from Havana to Key West have I had such thrills! I think," shrilly, "I *think*, Katrine, we are sinking right now!"

And, true enough, something decidedly unpleasant was happening underneath us. The tracks appeared to be parting company, and the train sliding uncertainly about through space.

"Mama!" shrieked a terrified little girl in the seat back of us. "Mama! We're drowning! We're drowning!"

The porter, very black and smiling gayly, emerged from the narrow corridor, and leaned his body against the mahogany door. "Looks mighty like a wash-out," he remarked pleasantly to whomsoever happened to be listening. "Think we're due to stop right heah and right now!"

"Great heavens!" ejaculated Mrs. Brompton. "You don't mean that this measly little rain has washed away the tracks?"

"It sho' has!" the porter returned smilingly.

"Measly little rain!" repeated Jim, prostrating himself. "My Gawd, Leila! I'd hate to be among those present when your idea of a nice big *healthy* rain happened to be falling!"

"Well," explained Mrs. Brompton, "it's an awfully measly little thing to cause the amount of bother which it's going to do. Do you realize, James Brompton, that this wash-out is liable to make us hours and hours late in getting to Chicago, and to that perfectly gorgeous house party?"

"Oh!" everyone exclaimed in a crestfallen chorus. "Oh, that's so!"

The brakeman whirled past at this moment. "Hey there!" shouted Jim, catching the blue-uniformed youth by the sleeve, and right-about-facing him with a violence that caused the lantern in his hand barely to escape completely knocking off the head of a man across the aisle. "Say!" demanded Jim, "how long are we goin' to wait here?"

"Two weeks—if this rain keeps up!" returned the brakeman brusquely, irate at Jim's actions, and turning to the man whose brain had just escaped concussion, "'scuse me."

"You jolly well nearly removed my head," laughed the young man, "but under the circumstances" (and he swallowed the "stances" in such a way as to lead me to believe he was *not* an American), "under the circumstances, I shall let you off."

Tevis punched me violently in the ribs. "English!" she pronounced in a stentorian whisper.

"And *attractive*!" I returned. "Say, has *that* sat across the aisle from us all

afternoon and escaped our notice? Tevis, honey, have you lost your eyesight?"

"Not on your crayon portrait!" she breathed, rolling her eyes (which, take it from me, are, darn them, my idea of *something* to roll)—rolling her eyes, as I was saying, at the gentleman in question. "Little Tevis would have been on the job had that old lamb-pie been here all afternoon! He must have just come in from the smoker!"

In the meantime Jim was striking up an acquaintance. "Awfully annoying," he remarked tentatively to the stranger, "this rain!"

"Beastly," replied the Englishman, because *sans doute*, that was what he was. That is all he said. Leave it to an Englishman to be reserved when it comes to taking up with any Tom, Dick and Harry! Of course, *we* were highly respectable citizens but he had no way of knowing it. A "society woman" isn't in it nowadays unless she's able to make herself into an exact reproduction of a Winter Garden chorus girl!

"Let's walk out to the platform and have a look at things," suggested Jim, feeling, for some reason or other, particularly friendly that day.

"As you like," returned the young man, and rose, displaying as he did so the fact that he was six feet tall, and wore a perfectly darling gray tweed suit with a ducky belt across the back of the coat. His shoes, also, were highly satisfactory, being black and flat and quite large. One can always judge a man's character by his shoes. If they be pug-toed, or buttoned, or high-heeled, or of a brilliant orange—*good night!*

Marie Morean, who looks like a fashion-plate from *Vogue*, and Adelaide Barstow, who is a dainty, pretty thing, swarmed down on us as soon as the men disappeared. They, too, were going to the Holworthy house party, and now, at last free from a game of bridge with two old ladies at the other end of the car, joined us. "Who's the sweetie with Jim?" Marie inquired excitedly.

"Sit down and shut up!" commanded Mrs. Jim. "Do you realize that we are not going to get to Chicago tonight? Do you comprehend the fact that we are marooned out here in a cornfield, a million miles from a lemon, and that the Halworthys' perfectly good house party is going on without us? Are you aware that the worst cloud-burst in twenty years is—is *bursting*? Do you understand—"

"Leila!" purred Adelaide, "your speeches are simply elegant! You ought to be a soap-box suffragette. Anyone with such a flow of language! My dear, you have Bryan backed off the Chautauqua boards! You—"

"My dear Leila!" interrupted Jim, dropping down on us very suddenly. "May I present Sir Lionel Glencanne? This is my wife, Mrs. Brompton. And Miss Morean, Miss Langdon, Miss Barstow, Miss Anstruther—Sir Lionel Glencanne."

Our eyes nearly popped out of our heads. Think of what was on the train with us, will you? Something young, good-looking and *titled*! He smiled engagingly and inclined his sleek head in acknowledgment as each name was mentioned, murmuring the while something quite unintelligible about being "chahmed."

A silence followed. Everyone was trying to think of something startlingly clever to say, and even if I had thought of something brilliant to remark, I wouldn't have opened my head, for I hadn't the slightest conception of how to address the chap, and one can't just leap into conversation without some sort of preface! I had never met a "Sir" before and I didn't know whether to call the man "Sir Lionel," or "Sir Glencanne"—or "kiddo."

Marie came to the rescue with an utterly bromidic, "Did you ever know such a rain?"

Then with great strides, the Pullman conductor, fat, important and sporting a huge diamond ring, breezed in. "Water's gettin' higher every minute," he announced to the passengers, and a conglomeration of dismayed ejacula-

tions followed. "Not a *chance* of a wreck-train reachin' us! Guess we're due to camp here for *some* time!"

One of the maiden ladies from Keokuk, Iowa (with whom Marie and Adelaide had been bridging it) began to weep. "Calm yourself, my dear lady," begged the gentlemanly conductor, "do calm yourself."

"Yes," said Jim in an undertone, "the old girl had better cheer up, for the worst is *certainly* yet to come."

"It sho' is!" grinned the porter, who had just joined the party. "All them low-lives in the coaches is goin' to have to be given sleepin' space in the Pullmans."

"You don't *mean*," Mrs. Jim snorted indignantly, "you *don't* mean that all those awful dagoes and cut-throats and filthy bohunks are coming in here to sleep with us?"

"My dear Leila!" pleaded Jim. "Don't be so graphic!"

The conductor who had, I think, formed a secret crush on Mrs. Jim, stepped to her side. "It's a rule of the railroad, madam," he explained, "that if anything like this happens, all the passengers must be fed and slept, but," confidentially, "I shall see to it that only the very—ah—*cleanest* persons are allowed in *this* Pullman."

"Well," remarked Jim, "we might as well sit down and be as comfortable as possible as long as we can. There's no use weeping over burnt fudge." After which, he seated himself next to Mrs. Jim. Marie and Adelaide dropped down on the seat facing them. I sat across the aisle and Tevis, busy with eyes and tongue, saw to it that Sir Lionel and she got on the same seat—vis-a-vis to me. My dear, but the hit Tevis was attempting to make on that young Englishman was pitifully apparent! She was just talking his arm off, and somewhat *alarmed*, he was answering her—when he got the chance—with a very reserved, "Oh, rather," or "Yes, indeed, simply topping!" or "Ripping, I should say!"

About ten o'clock, the exodus from the coach into our car began. The

porter had been hustling around for the last half-hour, making up berths. Added to those already booked for sections, the poor Pullman had to accommodate a sloppy woman of thirty and her two dirty and squawling brats, a thin and shabby man who looked as if he were in the last stages of the pip or something, and a smart Alec of a fellow with a roached pompadour, and pants with enough material in them to make several more pairs—and, hold your breath, the *prettiest* girl I ever saw. She was not more than nineteen, and she wore the most hopeless looking suit imaginable—Delft blue, mind you, and about three sizes too small. Her hat was one of those funny little round affairs, found only in extremely small towns. It was cocked up on her head like the tin can Happy Hooligan wears in the funny papers. Her hair, though, was lovely enough to make you forgive and forget the hat—light brown it was, with glints of gold, and curling about her face. The conductor planted her down beside me.

As luck would have it, she, in seating herself, stumbled over Tevis' foot, "I beg your pardon," she murmured confusedly, raising her eyes to Tevis—brown eyes they were, clear and wide and innocent. Tevis, furious at having her new ten-dollar pumps stepped on, returned the girl's appealing gaze with a glance, frigid enough to freeze the Hudson, and didn't say a word! With a disgusting little sneer on her face, she turned to Sir Lionel for approval.

To cover the embarrassment which I felt for the girl over Tevis' snub, I began to talk to her. "This is a perfectly awful storm, isn't it?" I said, and it was a fool remark, considering the fact that the rain was almost beating down the windows. "Oh, awful," she replied, and I could tell by the way her mouth twitched that tears were very near the surface. The poor little thing seemed frightened. "And I am so 'fraid! I've never before been away from home at night!"

"Great heavens!" I murmured, "what have you been doing all your life?"

"Well," she replied, "I've lived with my father and mother on a farm in Iowa—and there just never seemed any call to leave!"

Sir Lionel cut in here, "And how did you happen to be on the train to-night?" he inquired, a twinkle in his blue eyes. "Did you—ah—receive the call?"

The girl looked at him for the first time. "I've got an aunt in Englewood," she replied graciously, "and I am going to visit her." Then with a proud little smile that was really quite adorable, "I saved up enough egg money all myself to take the trip."

"Egg money!" repeated Marie Morean, across the aisle, exchanging amused glances with Adelaide. "My dear! How utterly weird!"

"Weird?" questioned Sir Lionel, a puzzled light in his blue eyes. "Weird?"

"Strange," explained Marie, "crazy—idiotic!"

Sir Lionel looked at her rather coldly. "I don't see anything strange, crazy or idiotic about taking a trip on money that one has made in the sale of eggs; in fact, I think it is most sensible and commendable. Aren't we all, metaphorically, doing just that very thing? I know that I, for one, am."

"Oh," exclaimed Tevis, "how interesting! Do tell us how you made your 'egg money.'"

Sir Lionel looked abashed. "Oh," he stammered, "really, you know, it is nothing. It—"

"Ah," begged Marie, arching her eyebrows in a manner meant to kill, "pretty please!"

"Well," said the young man, the slow red of embarrassment surmounting his temples, "I—ah—write stories."

"No!" exclaimed Mrs. Jim. "Why, how perfectly wonderful! Are you writing something now?"

"Why, yes," returned Sir Lionel, "I have something or other on hand all the time."

"Oh," exclaimed Tevis, rolling her big eyes Sir Lionel-ward. "Tell us all about the story you are writing at present! I am sure it must be wonderful! Please let us hear the plot."

Sir Lionel, poor thing, seemed to be horribly fussed by the attention that was being thrust upon him. "My dear people," he replied, and his accent was ever so attractive. "It is a very commonplace plot—about a young married woman who is on the verge of eloping with a young and handsome villain, when she hears her child cry out in his sleep—and decides not to go."

"Ah," murmured Tevis, looking very wise, "The call of the wild," as it were!"

The funny little person on the seat beside me giggled. "I think it was more than likely *the squawl of the child!*" she said demurely, a little devil dancing in her eyes.

Tevis could have slapped this strange country thing in the face, but she managed to ignore her with admirable *sang-froid*, and turning to Sir Lionel, said in a voice so low and loving that you would have *howled* to hear it, "I imagine that your love scenes are simply *wonderful!*"

Sir Lionel, looking as if he would have liked to jump out of the window, right into the storm, replied, "Well, really, you know, they're not! I, myself, know so little about love. Upon my word, I couldn't give you the definition of a kiss, for instance, if the failure meant being shot at sunrise!"

"Oh," said Adelaide flippantly—and bromidically, "I know the definition of a kiss. It's *nothing*, divided by two!"

"That depends upon who is doing the kissing!" Mrs. Jim objected. "You see, there are so many different *kinds* of kisses!"

"Yes," agreed Marie, turning up her pretty nose. "Horrible, sloppy, tobacco-y kisses, for instance."

"And," interpolated Adelaide, "deceitful, catty, girl-to-girl kisses."

Jim crossed one long leg over the other, and got into the conversation. "Crude, awkward, badly managed, sixteen-year-old-boy kisses," he remarked, shaking his head sadly.

"Heart-breaking kisses of parting," offered Mrs. Jim. "When you do not know how or when you are to meet

again, with the face about to vanish from your view."

"Warm, clinging kisses," breathed Tevis, "filled with divine passion."

The dowdy person next to me folded her hands in her lap, and lowered her eyes. "There's *one* kind of kiss that you all have forgotten," she said softly.

Sir Lionel leaned forward. "What kind is that?" he asked, with interest.

"The very nicest of all," she replied in a low voice. "Baby kisses—soft and warm, and damp."

Marie and Tevis exchanged glances. "How utterly weird!" Marie remarked shrilly.

Jim arose and stretched himself. "This conversation's getting too deep for *muh!*" he announced. "It's time to go to bed, anyhow. We are keeping everybody in the car awake with our silly babble—except, I believe, the fat old gentie in number five. He has been snoring like the devil for the last half hour!"

"Say, miss," said the porter, coming up at this moment and addressing the little jay beside me, "your berth is made up now! Number ten, miss, right down this way."

Later, in the dressing-room, I learned that her name was Emily Anderson, that she was nineteen years old, and, mind you, that she had been teaching sixty pupils in a country school for the past year. Imagine having *that* for your instructor in the paths of knowledge!

I never in my life have spent such a miserable seven hours as I did that night. The woman with her two dirty brats slept in the berth above, and they either bawled or talked just exactly *half* the night, while the other half was spent in dreaming that I was drowning! At not a minute later than five, the entire train crew got together, in our car, *apparently*, and discussed the possibility of a repair train's reaching us that morning. I lay in bed another hour and then, deciding that "rest for the weary" was out of the question, started to get dressed. It was while I was putting on my shoes that someone

brushed against me in the aisle. Looking angrily out from between my curtains, I beheld Emily flitting towards the dressing room, and if you'll believe me, she didn't have anything on but a night gown! It was quite modest, however, being of some thick material, long-sleeved and buttoned tightly up to the neck. Her hair was clustered about her face and shoulders in riotous curls and her little feet were quite guiltless of covering. Half way up the aisle she bumped into—Sir Lionel. He had, it seemed, been dressed for hours, and was just roaming from car to car, seeking what he might devour. An amused smile twitched at the corners of his good-looking mouth when his surprised glance fell upon the small figure in the night gown, but with charming grace he flattened himself against the curtains of the nearest berth, nodded a gracious "good morning" and let her pass.

Tevis looked like the very devil when she finally got dressed. She was *clothed*, but *not* in her right mind. Her hair was out of curl, her lips were rough and chapped, and no one had any lip-salve with which to smooth them down, and a large gob of rouge simply *glared* at you from either cheek. She hadn't brought her maid, and she said that if she, Tevis Langdon, was ever fool enough to start off on a trip again without the valuable Bundy, or whatever idiotic name she calls her, she hoped to be dropped into a vat of hot tar! Mrs. Jim, too, was howling around about having to dress herself. It seems that neither one of them had thought it necessary to carry along a slavey, being's the Holworthy house is always full of superfluous servants and they had not dreamt that we would be more than a few hours on the train.

Marie, however, looked fresh and well groomed, despite the fact that she had circles under her eyes, reaching half way down to her chin. As soon as we were dressed, everybody, including the center of attraction, *i. e.*, Sir Lionel, and *excluding* Emily, the vil-

lage queen, got together on the platform to view what damage the rain, now stopped, had done—and to ridicule Emily.

"My dear," said Adelaide, "that creature has never been in a sleeper before!"

"Well, I believe it," giggled Mrs. Jim. "Have you noticed how polite she is to the porter?"

"Polite," exclaimed Tevis, "she's positively friendly!"

"Did you," inquired Tevis, "did you see her toilet articles?"

"Did I?" rejoined Marie, rolling her eyes with horror. "Well, *rather*. An old snag of a comb, and a tooth-brush! Not another thing. Not a grain of powder! Not a sign of a powder-puff! Not a smidgeon of lip-salve! Not a nail-file! Not an eye-cup. Not even a *hair* brush, my dear!"

"Well," murmured Mrs. Jim, stifling a yawn, "it's only a raving beauty that can get along without all those aids to the injured!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Mrs. Jim. "It—"

But here the conductor, wild-eyed, broke in upon us. "Can any of you ladies cook," he demanded, without preamble.

"Cook?" Adelaide repeated feebly.

"Cook!" returned the conductor firmly. "C-double o-k-cook!"

"My dear!" Marie giggled shrilly, "How utterly weird!"

The conductor shot a disgusted glance at her. "You won't think so," he remarked dryly, "when you hear that the cooks in the diner have struck, and there's not a chance for breakfast unless you get it yourself!"

"You don't mean," demanded Jim, looking very formidable, "that this whole trainful of people is going to starve?"

"Only this car," replied the conductor, and there was something almost womanly in the cattiness of his tones. "This car was left to the last to be fed, and the cooks have simply drawn the line on doing another lick of work. Of course, they'll get fired when we get to

Chicago—but that won't feed no hungry mouths now!"

"No," agreed Jim with a sigh, "that's not buying beer for the babies now!"

"Surely," said Sir Lionel, "surely one or more of the women on this car can cook!" He looked about at us, as if we were a strange species of animal, and inwardly, we all cursed our luck for not having devoted our entire lives to Domestic Science!

"I'm afraid," Tevis murmured meekly, "that I can't even boil an egg. How about you, Katrine?" Cat that she was, she wanted to show *me* up, too!

"Oh," I replied lightly, "making fudge is the length, breadth and thickness of my culinary accomplishments! Have you asked that woman in there with the two children?"

Sir Lionel looked at me coldly. "Don't you think her hands are pretty well filled taking care of those two children?"

"Katrine," reproved Jim, an amused smile playing on his lips, "you knoweth not the manifold trials of a mother! Now, if I were asked to recommend an all-around cook and housemaid, I would suggest Emily Guggenslocker, or whatever her name is—the little girl who sat with you for a while last night, Katrine."

Sir Lionel made a bolt for the door. "I'll go ask her!" he called over his shoulder.

He returned a minute later, Emily, dewy, fresh and rosy, in his wake. Her hair was knotted simply at the back of her neck, and she wore the horrible blue skirt of the night before, and a simple white blouse.

"*Can you cook?*" we all demanded in one breath.

She looked at us with a superior smile on her red lips.

"Certainly!" she responded disdainfully. "Any one with a grain of sense can cook!"

The conductor, with a wild whoop of joy, caught her by the arm. "Come with me!" he shouted, pulling her towards the dining-car.

"I'm going, too!" announced Sir Lion-

nel, his eyes looking very blue and boyish.

"Let's all go!" suggested Marie, not willing to let Sir Lionel out of her sight for one moment.

"All right!" agreed Tevis, the same idea in mind. So, we all piled into the dining car.

The waiters were lolling around, talking about how they were being imposed upon, whereas the three cooks were nowhere to be seen. I don't know whether the conductor had forced them to jump overboard or not!

As soon as Emily saw how very small the little zinc-lined kitchen was, she made it plain that she didn't want any helpless females standing about in her way, so Mrs. Jim, Marie, Adelaide, Tevis and I made ourselves scarce. Sir Lionel, however, stuck closer to her than a brother! He couldn't be *hired* to leave that kitchen!

It was less than half an hour later that with due pomp and ceremony the ah—inmates—of our Pullman were ushered by one of the waiters into the dining car—the fellow with the full trousers, the two old maids from Keokuk, the pippish gentleman, etc. The car was redolent with the aroma of boiling coffee, and the frying of crisp bacon. There were fresh eggs, too, and the most delicious little hot biscuits I ever put in my mouth—golden brown things the size of a half dollar, and fit for the Queen of Sheba, herself.

Like ravenous bears, we gobbled up that delicious food. Like wild Indians, we pounced upon plate after plate of those dainty biscuits. Like hungry dogs, we devoured piece after piece of that crisp and fragrant bacon! And, for the first time in my life, I wished that I had learned to cook!

The dining car conductor was so grateful, he could have *kissed* Emily. In his mind, she had saved not only *his* honor, but that of the railroad, its president, its vice-president and its general manager!

After breakfast, Sir Lionel and Marie disappeared, and believe me, I felt none too pleased when, after glimpsing

about for half an hour, I discovered them on the back platform, sitting on camp-stools, and laughing uproariously. I thought it would have been more fitting had they concentrated their gaze on the constantly rising water which threatened to send us all floating down the railroad bed at any moment, instead of *looking* at each other, the way they were doing! Marie is awfully pretty, but, take it from me, her silliness is enough to make any sensible fellow foam at the mouth!

Tevis, Adelaide, and Mr. and Mrs. Jim played bridge all morning. Their stakes were high, and their misunderstandings many, especially between Jim and Tevis, because when he had but one of the opponent's trumps, he insisted upon leading it, whereas Tevis considered that a *rank* thing to do. By lunch time they were in awful humors, and starved.

Emily, it seemed, was not going to be pressed into service again, by virtue of two of the porters having been persuaded to take the cooks' places. They, wise old birds, realized that if they made good, their tips would be large and many, because no one is more grateful and generous than a hungry man whose wants are finally satisfied.

Sir Lionel, Mrs. Jim, Tevis and I ate lunch at the same table. Now, there are a lot of ridiculous things about Tevis, but, you've simply *got* to hand it to her, she's right there when it comes to getting off the clever lines! She's Madame DeStael, Pompadour, and Fanny Brice all rolled into one. She's funny, but she's not coarse. Her wit has a strong foundation of knowledge, but she's wise enough to keep from the men the fact that she has ever read anything deeper than an Elinor Glynn novel. She is clever, but she is clever enough not to appall anyone with what is going on in that little noggin of hers. She strives to amuse, and believe me, she succeeds! Why, Mrs. Jim and I just sat at that table, our mouths shut like clams, while that old Tevis got off one *bon-mot* after another! Even if we *had* had the chance to get in a word,

our remarks would have sounded flat alongside of hers. Sir Lionel seemed to be having the time of his life, and I've got to confess that it was with something closely akin to envy that I beheld Tevis *solidifying*, as our lunch progressed, the hit she was making.

When we had finished eating, we returned to the Pullman. Emily, funny little thing, was sitting in the first seat as we entered the car, one of the babies, belonging to the woman who had slept above me the night before, in her lap. Her hair was tousled, a result, no doubt, of a mauling from the grubby little kid, who, fortunately, was now asleep. I thought she was a sight for sore eyes, and was just saying to myself that only a country know-nothing would sit around holding strange children in her arms when Sir Lionel, directly back of me, caught sight of her and said under his breath, very quickly and softly, "Ah, the Sistine Madonna!"

"What?" I gasped.

"Oh, nothing!" he replied hurriedly, the slow red creeping up under the tan of his cheek bones. "*You wouldn't understand, anyway.*"

When we all got seated again, I, as luck would have it, found myself with Mrs. Jim, whereas Adelaide and Sir Lionel were ensconced together in a seat by themselves further down the aisle. Now, I wasn't any too keen on this arrangement, for Adelaide is one of those very feminine girls who always appeal to men. I thought how strange it would be were this good-looking young Englishman to pass by the clever Tevis and the beautiful Marie and fall for Adelaide, who is daintiness and sweetness personified, but *no* vampire.

Shot by worried glances from old Tevis, Marie and me, those two carried on a nice little tête-à-tête, until, sent by the Gods, the porter of our car dashed down the aisle.

"Watah's a-goin' down," he announced gaily. "Guess that there wreck train can reach us by mornin'."

"Hooray!" shouted the fat gentie who had snored so vociferously the

night before, and with his utterance as a signal, the rest of the passengers burst forth with expressions of relief. Everybody got up and ran to the platforms to see for themselves, or else began visiting from seat to seat, and in the mêlée Adelaide and Sir Lionel got separated.

When things calmed down again, *he* was discovered sitting on the arm of Emily's seat and discussing that horrible brat she was cuddling. And, if you'll believe me, we didn't see a thing of him, except by *long distance*, all the rest of the evening. He positively *clung* to that Emily person!

"My dear," Tevis confided in me, "anyone can see that he is just talking to that little jade out of charity. What a crude creature she is, anyhow! Really, I didn't know that anything so rough and unpolished existed in these days of civilization!"

Well, night came on, the porter began to make up the berths, and there was nothing to do but go to bed. It was while Marie, Tevis, Adelaide and I were putting on a few finishing touches in the dressing-room that we heard the fat gentie and Sir Lionel engaged in conversation in the corridor outside. "Well," the robust one said, "guess we'll get out of this by morning."

"Good Lord!" returned Sir Lionel, "I hope so! This has been a beastly experience!"

"Oh, I don't know's it been so bad for *you*!" returned the other. I could just tell that this tone of voice was accompanied by a dig in the ribs for Sir Lionel. "*You've* got nothing to kick about! You've been surrounded all the while by a bevy of bouncing beauties!"

"Huh," grunted Sir Lionel, "Worse luck!"

"By the way!" said the fat man, "what do you think of our American society girls?"

"Well," returned the Goal of our Great Desire, "judging from these creatures on the train here, I should say that they are a set of damned fools!"

"Oh!" gasped Tevis, her hand stopping in midair, half way from the cold cream jar to her face.

"Silly, babbling, brainless geese," continued Sir Lionel. "Conceited, self-centered parasites!" He was getting all "het up" over his opinions. "Now," he continued (and that English accent no longer sounded so terribly attractive in our ears!) "now, just look at the difference between those so-called 'society girls' and—ah—and—ah—Miss Anderson!"

"Well, I should hope so!" Marie sniffed indignantly, and I motioned frantically to her to keep her mouth shut, so that we might hear the rest of Sir Lionel's flattering remarks.

"Fine girl!" grunted his companion. "Pretty, too."

"Pretty!" exclaimed Sir Lionel. "Well, *rahther!* A *beauty*, I should say! Frank and sweet and charming! In fact, I *rahther* like to think of her as the typical American girl!"

"My Gawd!" gasped Tevis, holding her hand to her head.

"To tell you the truth," Sir Lionel went on in a lower voice, his head, no doubt, close to that of his confidant, "To tell you the truth, Emily, that is—ah—Miss Anderson, has just consented to be my wife!"

The glass of water which Marie had been holding in one hand fell to the floor. "How utterly weird!" she exclaimed through frozen lips.



IN THE PARK

By Harold Hersey

AS it happened, according to one of the strange whims of Fate, A poet and an ordinary tramp took seats together in the park. Also was it strange to note that the tramp fell asleep and had a beautiful dream; The poet remained awake thinking of where he could get something to eat.



CONSISTENCY is a virtue. We love women for their faults, and they have found it out.



WHEN a man goes to ask a favor he ponders, "What shall I say?"; a woman, "What shall I wear?"



POSSESSION is nine points in ennui.

APOLOGIA PRO VITA SUA

By Mark Lawson

I AM a contented failure. I mix better cocktails than any other man in New York. My enemies sneer at me, but they can't resist my jokes. I have a knack of wearing cheap clothes well, and the girls adore my hair. I know ten variations of the tango. I win fifty dollars a week at poker, but I never have a cent. I am a favorite with mammas because I'm always nice to their homely daughters, and I have an open invitation to their houses which comes in handy when I haven't the price of a meal, which is often. I lend a sympathetic ear to misunderstood wives, and I am the midnight prop of many a young husband who cannot mix his drinks. I lead cotillions and I'm an artist with the chafing dish. Busi-

ness men, madly chasing the where-withal to pay their wives' bills, scorn me as a ladies' man, but envy my blissful, lazy contentment, my good digestion and my slim waist. For thirty-five years I have dodged matrimony. Whenever I feel my heart control getting beyond me I go home and kiss my dog. I realize that some day this will-o-the-wisp existence must end. When it does I shall wed the emaciated girl on the Avenue whose father has oodles of money. I am always in debt and my only assets are my blithesome spirits and my youthful looks. I live practically on the bounty of my rich friends. I haven't any self-respect, but I have a happy disposition. I am a contented failure.



MY LOVE

By Myron Zobel

MY love has virtues from three continents:
From Asia, beauty;
From Egypt, soul;
From Rome, her worship of the Emperor's genius;—
I am the Emperor.



DEMOCRACY is an attempt to turn folk lore into history.

THE RESPECTIVE VIRTUES OF HÉLOISE AND MAGGIE

By Randolph Bartlett

CHARACTERS

MADAME HÉLOISE DUFRAND (*A tall but not too slender brunette, who has not permitted the generosity of nature to engender disrespect for the refinements of art, and who has mastered the science of unconventionality.*)

MRS. EDWARD THURSTON (*Short and stout, whom not all the resources of the modiste can make to appear fashionable, who has a lurking suspicion that talcum and silken hosiery are immoral, and who could not define conventionality, but believes the definition may be found in the Book of Common Prayer.*)

MARY (*Her eldest child, aged eleven or twelve, the spindle age, reflecting*

her mother's bourgeois outlook, and adding to it a persistence of her own.)

SUE (*Her youngest sister, about three years younger, in whom curiosity is tempered by dullness.*)

ARCHIE (*Their fat brother, aged five, whose inquiring mind usually expresses itself in inquiring for something sugary to eat.*)

EDWARD THURSTON (*Tall, distinguished in appearance, not only because his hair is iron gray, but also because his mind matches his hair, and gives him that poise which comes only with a conviction that he should have and can get whatever he wants.*)

MARIE (*Héloise's maid.*)

SCENE—*A woman's artistically but luxuriously furnished apartment in a highly respectable New York hotel, which, to be more explicit, is a hotel where the definition of scandal is "anything that gets into the newspapers." The day is hot, but the rooms are cool with that flavor of comfortable temperature one intuitively ascribes to the occupant rather than the architect. This occupant is Madame Héloise Dufrand, though one is willing to venture that, if he met her in Paris she would be introduced as, say Mrs. Elizabeth Burton, and if in London as Signora Filippa di Parchesi, and in either city would carry it off to perfection. She is always "an interesting foreigner." At present she has completed her toilette for the evening, and in exquisite but comfortable negligé is lounging on a big davenport, and idly fingering a volume of lyrics by Paul Verlaine. In Paris it would be Arthur Symons, and in London Sapho. The telephone bell rings, and her maid answers.*

THE MAID:

A lady with three children wishes to see you. She does not give her name, and says it is a personal matter, but you do not know her.

HÉLOISE:

(*Languidly curious.*)

Very well. Tell them to send her up.

(*Héloise returns to Verlaine, and in a few minutes there is a knock at the*

door. Enter a stout woman, red and perspiring, but dressed in the fashion, accompanied by a lanky girl of eleven or twelve, a pudgy one of eight or nine, and an overfed boy of about five. All fly the flag of wealth, and mop themselves with handkerchiefs which are soggy from constant use. The children array themselves in a half-circle of outer fortifications in front of their mother who, when the maid has departed, gives her face a final swabbing, and breaks into speech.)

THE MOTHER:

You don't know me, but I am Mrs. Edward Thurston. I guess—

HÉLOISE:

(Tossing Verlainé upon a tabaret, and rising. Graciously.)

O-oh, Mrs. Thurston. I am so glad to meet you. I know your husband quite well. Won't you and the children sit down?

MRS. THURSTON:

(Utterly routed, she sits, and even forgets that it is hot. The girls also sit, but the boy pokes around a big table in search of something, probably candy.)

You—you admit that you are intimate with my husband?

HÉLOISE:

I did not say "intimate." The word is abused. I said I know him quite well.

MRS. THURSTON:

Then, I don't know that there is anything more to be said. I hoped that you were innocent, and that you did not know he was married and has three children.

(She looks them over and sees the boy snooping.)

Archie, Archie, come away and sit down.

ARCHIE:

I want some of that candy.

HÉLOISE:

Let him have it. I never eat it—it is so fattening.

MRS. THURSTON:

He shall not. We will take nothing

from this place. I see there is no use in asking you to help me bring my husband to his senses. There is nothing left but divorce, and how I dread the scandal on account of the children!

HÉLOISE:

Mrs. Thurston, you are making a great mistake. I must tell you that you were right in one thing. I did not know Mr. Thurston was married. And I am angry—I am furious! Just because I do not rush about and tear my hair, or say a lot of things that would shock your children, do not imagine that I am not fearfully indignant.

MRS. THURSTON:

Perhaps the children had better go. (She looks them over.)

Archie, you must not eat all that candy. Give some to Mary and Sue.

(Archie abstracts two small chocolate almonds and gives one to each of the girls, who hold them doubtfully in their moist hands until the coating all melts off.)

HÉLOISE:

(Thoughtfully.)

No, let the children stay. We shall have some tea shortly, and they shall have some cake.

MARY:

(She is the lanky one.)

Shall I say what you told me to, now, mamma?

MRS. THURSTON:

(Quickly.)

No, dear—I don't know what you mean. But never mind.

(To Héloise.)

Just as you say, of course. And so my husband deceived you, too. In that case I can forgive you for whatever has happened.

HÉLOISE:

Do not jump at conclusions. Nothing, in the sense you mean, has happened. Your husband has been very attentive—that is all. He has taken me to dinner, to the opera, for motor rides, but you have no grounds for divorce. Of course, you will believe that or not, as you see fit.

SUE:

Mamma, what did you tell Mary to say?

MRS. THURSTON:

(A little confused.)

Never mind. I mean, I don't know what you children are talking about. Archie! I declare, that boy has eaten every speck of the candy.

HÉLOISE:

It makes no difference.

ARCHIE:

Can I have some cake now?

MRS. THURSTON:

Come here to me.

(He wobbles to her.)

Now, sit down here beside me and be a good boy.

(To Héloise.)

Really, I don't know what to say, but since he has deceived you too, I suppose you will have nothing more to do with him, and so there is nothing to be said.

HÉLOISE:

Oh, yes, by the way, there is something.

(She goes into another room.)

MARY:

(In a hoarse whisper.)

Don't you remember, mamma, you told me to say—

MRS. THURSTON:

Shhh. I don't want you to say it after all.

HÉLOISE:

(Returns and holds out her hands. In one there is a diamond sunburst and two rather valuable rings; in the other a necklace that would easily pass for pearls anywhere but in a jewelry store.)

Are these yours, Mrs. Thurston?

MRS. THURSTON:

(Astonished.)

Why, yes. I never missed them. But, then, I don't care about going out a great deal, and so seldom look at my jewels. Edward keeps them in the safe at his office.

HÉLOISE:

I thought they looked as if they were not quite new, when he gave them to me.

MRS. THURSTON:

(With a sigh.)

They were not new when he gave them to me. They had been returned to him by a former fiancée. That was nearly thirteen years ago.

SUE:

(Several minutes late as usual.)

Then there was something you told Mary to say.

MRS. THURSTON:

Children are so exasperating at times. They get the strangest ideas and you simply cannot do anything with them. Now about this jewelry—really, I don't care about it, and you may as well have it. I am so grateful to you, I really would like to have you accept it, from me, not from him.

HÉLOISE:

Really, I could not think of it. It is very kind of you, but I think you should confront him with it.

MRS. THURSTON:

(Aghast.)

Oh, no, I couldn't do that. I wouldn't for worlds have him know I came here to see you. If you don't care to keep them, give them back to him, yourself, or, rather, send them.

HÉLOISE:

To think of the deceit of that man. Why, I thought—oh, well, it makes no difference.

MRS. THURSTON:

(Her curiosity awakened, she does not notice that Mary and Sue are having a conference, or that Archie had waddled out of the room.)

You thought—what? Please tell me.

HÉLOISE:

Well, I don't see why I shouldn't. He was so considerate, and respectful in every way, I really believed he intended to ask me to marry him. Of course, I wouldn't have done so, even if he were free.

MRS. THURSTON:
Marry! You!

HÉLOISE:
(Looks at her a few seconds, to be sure she has gathered the meaning of the double exclamation. Then she is angry.)

Yes, marry—me! And why not? Does it seem so remarkable that a man of taste should want to marry me?

MRS. THURSTON:
I beg your pardon. I didn't mean—er—

HÉLOISE:
Oh, yes, you did. You married women are all alike. If you see a woman who is handsome, and admired by men, and lives well—you elevate your eyebrows. If it were worth while I could prove that the source of my income is quite as honorable as that of yours.

MRS. THURSTON:
(Afraid she is losing ground.)
Really, I am sure—

SUE:
Mamma, what does "intrigue" mean?

MRS. THURSTON:
Really, we must be going.
(Looks around.)
Where is Archie? Archie! Come—we are going home.
(They all scatter and look for the fat boy.)

HÉLOISE:
(At the door of her boudoir.)
Here he is. Oh! He has smeared himself all over with powder and cold cream.

MRS. THURSTON:
(Rushing into the boudoir.)
Archie, you bad, bad boy!

HÉLOISE:
Take him into the bathroom.
(Mary and Sue snuggle together and giggle.)

(The telephone bell rings. The maid answers, and whispers something to Héloise, who hesitates a moment and whispers instructions. Mary and Sue

subside. Héloise moves pensively about the room, with a strange smile.)

HÉLOISE:
(To the girls.)
Perhaps you had better go in with your mother.
(They go out through the boudoir door. There is a light tap on the outer door of the apartment, and Héloise opens it.)

Ah, Edward, I had begun to give you up. You are just in time for tea.

EDWARD THURSTON:
(Entering with the air of a man entirely at home, but there is no kissing or embracing. He is of the successful professional type. He might be a banker, lawyer, or physician, and has the keen, strong features that women adore, especially when, as in his case, the hair which frames them is iron gray.)

Lord, but it's a comfort to come here a day like this. How do you do it, Héloise. I've been everywhere, and this is the only cool spot in town.

HÉLOISE:
Indeed! A few minutes ago it seemed quite warm here.

EDWARD:
Then you must have worked some magic in anticipation of my coming, for it is ideal now.

HÉLOISE:
(After a pause.)
I have been thinking, my friend, that it is time for our acquaintance to come to an end.

EDWARD:
(Startled and violently protesting.)
Good heavens, Héloise! Don't say a thing like that on a day like this. Why, what on earth ever suggested such a preposterous remark.

HÉLOISE:
Edward, you have been very kind, very attentive, and—very impersonal in your attentions. I appreciate you extremely. But there is a man who wants to marry me, and—

EDWARD:

Marry! You!

HÉLOISE:

(Furiously.)

Yes, yes, yes! Marry! Me! Do you know any reason why a man should not want to marry me? Just because—

EDWARD:

Héloise! Don't misunderstand me. There is every reason why any man would want to marry you, but you have no right to marry. You have too much to give. No man has the right to monopolize a woman like you. You are an institution, and should be protected from private greed.

HÉLOISE:

Oh, I see. Your view is that I should syndicate myself.

EDWARD:

Exactly! Héloise, Limited—there's an idea. Why, selfish as I am, I would not think of claiming all your time, demanding that you should be always subject to my orders, or forever accountable to me for all your actions.

HÉLOISE:

Very pretty, but what would I get out of it?

EDWARD:

The same infinite variety that you give. No one man is sufficient for you, on the same principle that you are possessed of more than any one man deserves. And marriage—for you! Awful! Think of the narrow life, the conventional routine, the boredom—and the nuisance of the inevitable divorce!

HÉLOISE:

You are extremely discouraging. All the same, I must insist that it is time for our acquaintance to come to an end.

EDWARD:

And what if I refuse to consent?

HÉLOISE:

Oh, there are various ways of persuading you to change your mind.

(The sound of voices comes through

the boudoir door, and Edward, startled, springs to his feet. Héloise remains on the davenport, an amused smile coming over her face as she watches for the scene. Mrs. Thurston, leading the renovated Archie by the hand, and followed by Mary and Sue, appears.)

EDWARD AND MRS. THURSTON:

(Simultaneously.)

Maggie! Edward!

(The tableau remains for several seconds, the only movements being the slight squirming of the children, who are puzzled, and aware that everything is not just right. Héloise smiles an amused smile. Edward and Maggie, wide-eyed, stare at each other. The wife, serene in her feeling of righteousness, is first to get control of herself.)

MRS. THURSTON:

Well, what have you to say for yourself?

EDWARD:

How did you get in here?

MRS. THURSTON:

Do you think you can go on as you have been, forever, without my hearing about it? I just came to talk things over with Madame Dufrand.

EDWARD:

Oh, you did!

(To Héloise.)

And I suppose this is why you have made up your mind that our acquaintance must end.

HÉLOISE:

Precisely. You lied to me, my friend.

EDWARD:

Of course, I lied to you, but I did not deceive you.

HÉLOISE:

I do not understand the distinction.

EDWARD:

A man lies to a woman to make their relations more pleasant than they could be otherwise. He deceives her to work an injury. Have I injured you in any way?

HÉLOISE:

N-o-o; I cannot say that you have.

EDWARD:

Then my lying was entirely proper.

MRS. THURSTON:

But you have injured *me*.

EDWARD:

In what way?

MRS. THURSTON:

Do you mean to say, here in the presence of your own children, that you see nothing wrong in going around with another woman than your wife, and getting yourself talked about?

EDWARD:

If I have been "talked about"—and I doubt very much if there has been any extensive gossip, because Héloise and I have been open and above-board in everything, gone only to public places, dined in public dining-rooms, occupied boxes at theatres; it is only the people who sneak around and try to be clandestine that get talked about. But if I have been "talked about," it has done you no harm. You will get sympathy from people who wouldn't have gone across the street to see you, previously. In fact, your social position will be greatly enhanced by the notoriety. "Such a nice woman, too," the gossips will say, when in other circumstances they would think of you as a dowdy frump, and wonder how I could stand living with you.

MRS. THURSTON:

Edward! How dare you?

(To the children.)

Children, I will not permit you to listen to such words. Here, go into this room and close the door.

HÉLOISE:

Please, not in the boudoir again.

(She rings for the maid.)

Marie, take the children into your room.

ARCHIE:

Can I have that cake now?

MRS. THURSTON:

Archie!

HÉLOISE:

Certainly. Marie, give them some cake.

MARY:

Mamma, was it papa you meant—

MRS. THURSTON:

(Flustered.)

Mary, do not speak of that again. I don't know what in the world you are thinking about.

SUE:

She means—

MRS. THURSTON:

Never mind, I say. Go on and get your cake.

(There is a pause after the children leave, and the offending husband appears to be the least uneasy person in the room. Mrs. Thurston, relieved of her impedimenta, resumes mopping her red, perspiring face. Héloise is palpably puzzled at Edward's nonchalance.)

EDWARD:

Well, let's see what there is to discuss. First of all, I have disposed of the charge of having lied to Héloise, by admitting it and proving it to have been the proper thing to do. I have likewise cleared myself of the accusation of having injured Maggie, by showing that she really benefits by whatever talk there may have been. What else is there?

MRS. THURSTON:

My jewels.

HÉLOISE:

Yes—giving me third-hand jewelry.

EDWARD:

(To Mrs. Thurston.)

How long since you last saw the things?

MRS. THURSTON:

I don't remember.

EDWARD:

Neither do I. I had forgotten their existence until one day I was going through my private safe, and found them.

(To Héloise.)

They were lying idle. If they could

give you any pleasure, I thought you might as well have them. Now, if I had gone out and spent a lot of money buying jewelry for you, Maggie might have a cause for complaint. Theoretically, at least, she would be injured, because money that might have been used to her benefit had been diverted to yours. The jewelry, to all intents and purposes, had been discarded. Why should you not have it?

HÉLOISE:

I take another woman's discarded jewelry! That is indelicate and unlike you, Edward.

EDWARD:

With jewelry, and such matters, the fact stands for itself. The previous history of the article is of no importance. Are the diamonds in the sunburst less brilliant than they were before? Would they be less beautiful on that exquisite black gown you wear? Of course not. The rest is sheer sentimentality, and *we* have never been sentimental.

MRS. THURSTON:

Well, there is one thing you cannot get around, with all your talk—you have been going about with another woman, and showering attentions upon her that you have no right to give any woman but your wife. You have neglected me—

EDWARD:

Wait a minute. You are trying to work yourself into an attack of hysterical weeping. But you have brought up the real point at issue, giving part of my time to another woman. Now let's see—I have known you for—about three months, is it not, Héloise?

HÉLOISE:

Nearer four.

EDWARD:

Time passes so quickly! However—have you seen any less of me in the last four months than formerly, Maggie?

MRS. THURSTON:

(*Reluctantly.*)

Well—no.

EDWARD:

Have I been inconsiderate in any way? Have I been less generous with your allowance? Is there anything you have wanted that you have not had?

MRS. THURSTON:

Well—no. But that was only because you had a guilty conscience, and were trying to atone to yourself.

EDWARD:

Nonsense. There are a great many things about you, Maggie, that I like, and I appreciate them more since I have known Héloise than I did previously.

HÉLOISE:

What do you mean?

EDWARD:

Simply this—did either of you ever see two women more absolutely different than you are? (*Héloise and Maggie examine each other.*) You have nothing in common—not one trait. Yet you both have many virtues. I admit, Héloise, that it is not easy in the present situation to discern Maggie's virtues.

MRS. THURSTON:

Edward, how dare you!

HÉLOISE:

I understand—and you mean that in the circumstances where your wife is at her best, I would be out of place.

EDWARD:

Exactly. For example, Maggie, I do not suppose you will claim for an instant that you are beautiful. You don't need to be. You are strong, healthy, wholesome. But I like beautiful women. Is there any reason why I should be debarred from enjoying the companionship of the beautiful Héloise?

MRS. THURSTON:

You could invite beautiful women to our home, and meet them in other ways that would be entirely proper.

EDWARD:

There is no satisfaction in that. It would be cheaper for me to rent automobiles than to own one, and pay the

chauffeur and upkeep, for all I use it, but I want my own car. The pleasure in the companionship of a beautiful woman is to have her, for a certain time, to one's self—to sit opposite her at dinner and know that, for the present, her beauty is all your own, her careful toilette and coiffure designed to charm just yourself.

HÉLOISE:

Beauty *à la carte* so to speak.

EDWARD:

Precisely. And on the other hand—I could employ a housekeeper who would reflect all Maggie's good qualities, but the same principle applies.

MRS. THURSTON:

Why, that is nothing short of Mormonism!

EDWARD:

Call it what you like. An epithet is not an argument. There is, doubtless, a great deal of good in Mormonism. But I have not practiced polygamy.

MRS. THURSTON:

It would lead to that, too.

HÉLOISE:

Not in this instance, I can assure you.

EDWARD:

And then, another point. You do not consider yourself clever, do you, Maggie?

MRS. THURSTON:

Edward, why will you humiliate me?

EDWARD:

On the contrary, you *are* clever—very clever—but not in the same way as Héloise. Yet the cleverness of Héloise would bore me to death if I had to encounter it constantly at home. You have a positive genius for creating an atmosphere where a man can let down, absorb new energy, in short—rest. I am not certain that this is not a much higher mental achievement than any of which Héloise is capable.

MRS. THURSTON:

(*Deprecatingly.*)
Oh, Edward!

HÉLOISE:

It is quite true. I am the champagne of life. Men like me, but I give them a headache if they get too much of me.

MRS. THURSTON:

Then, I suppose I am beer.

EDWARD:

Why not? That is nothing to be ashamed of. If a vote were to be taken as to which should be abolished, beer or champagne, is there any doubt which would be retained?

MRS. THURSTON:

Oh, I am getting positively dizzy. White is beginning to look black, and black white.

HÉLOISE:

After all, is there any such thing as black and white. I begin to think that there is nothing but grey.

MRS. THURSTON:

Well, I'm not going to try to discuss it any more. I'm going home.

HÉLOISE:

Not until we have had tea.

MRS. THURSTON:

Oh, I couldn't. And besides, there are the children—

HÉLOISE:

They shall have tea, too—or ice cream if you prefer.

MRS. THURSTON:

(*Looking doubtfully at Edward.*)
We-e-ll—

EDWARD:

Certainly. I am going to stay to tea anyhow, and then I will take you home in the machine. I have to dress, as Héloise and I are going to Sherry's this evening.

(*Mrs. Thurston, limp from the debate, has not the strength to protest. Héloise looks at her, sees no sign of disapproval, and says nothing. She rings for the maid, who enters.*)

HÉLOISE:

Bring the children in, and serve tea for six.

CURTAIN.

JERRY

By Helen Warburton

I WAS awfully fond of Jerry.

He was the black sheep of a rich genteel family. One of his brothers was a rising young surgeon, another a rising young lawyer. Jerry was young, too, but not rising; in fact, he slumped, he lounged, he wallowed, he sank. He refused ever to work, borrowed money on his father's credit, which he never returned, passed bad checks; was, in short, an out-and-out good-for-nothing scapegrace. But Jerry had one saving grace. For Jerry drank!

Indeed, it was only when he was drunk that he was quite himself—but then he was nearly always drunk. The sober Jerry was a creature of twitching nerves, bleary eyes, and doleful countenance. Drunk, his hands grew steady, his blue eyes clear, his cheeks ruddy, and a whimsical, crooked grin appeared. Sober, he was a silent creature; drunk, he talked. And how he could talk! His was a pungent, mirth-provoking, soul-satisfying humor which made the tears of laughter roll down his listeners' cheeks. It belonged to all lands, and all ages. It had a certain universal quality—gross, but side-splitting, enormously Rabelaisian!

Many the party that Jerry and I went on together! He liked my red hair, and, besides, he was continually inventing weird, new dancing steps, and it seems I fell in with them more quickly than any other girl; so he used always to take me with him. And wonderful parties they were! I can remember him making forceful, funny protestations of eternal constancy, and pausing in the midst of them to smile as a pretty girl passed. I had high hopes for him. Already, at twenty, he was beginning to

fatten, and while, under forty, men genuinely humorous on the colossal scale are still in their infant stages, already there were indications of that broad, blythe, beamy, savoury, ripe, Falstaffian smile which marks them one and all.

And then all of a sudden he went away.

After some time I began to make inquiries. But all I could learn was that his mother had finally, with many tears, induced him to spend a few weeks with her at an Adirondack camp. I waited—and wondered.

At last, one night, he came.

I blinked as he entered the room. He had grown thinner; his cheeks were no longer saffron-hued, as in the old days when he was sober, nor ruddy, as in the old days when he was not. They were a pretty pink. And he smiled sweetly—very, very sweetly, as he took my hand.

I was struck dumb, and sat staring at him without a word. Presently, he laughed rather embarrassedly:

"I suppose you are surprised at the change in me"—he spoke in dulcet tones—"everyone is. Well, they got hold of me just in time. I'm through with the old game—off the stuff—saved! Never want to see another drop of liquor in my life. I've been away, away in the great out-of-doors. I've been close to Nature's mighty, pulsating heart, among real men, the tillers of her warm, living soil, and they've saved me!"

From Rabelais to Jack London! I remained silent. So, after a few minutes, he continued:

"I read a lot up there, books about live men, and the great, open country.

I've brought you one—one of my favorites." And he handed me *The Spell of the Yukon!*

But as I summoned a grateful smile, I saw that his eyes looked positively soulful.

"The spell of the *you*, and that's no *con*," murmured the Jerry, who at one time could not speak about the weather, and be banal. And then my Jerry, my

quondam Jerry of the merry quips, leaned over and kissed my finger-tips!

"I want you to start afresh with me. I want you to marry me," he said, very slowly, very gently, in quite the proverbially correct I-am-offering-you-the-gift-of-the-gods manner.

The tears rose to my eyes as I listened to him.

And so they reformed my Jerry.



BEREAVEMENT

By Muna Lee

I

A WOMAN I have never seen,
A woman I shall never know,
Decreed that Grief should fare with me
Wherever I might go.

II

What are you like, oh, woman,
That you won his heart so soon?
I think you must be fairer
Than a white rose in the moon.

III

I think you must be fairer
Than a white rose in moonshine,
You who won so soon the heart
That had so long been mine.

IV

A woman I have never known,
A woman I shall never see,
Has shaken down the stars from heaven
And darkened all the earth for me.



JORGERSON'S TEETH

By Howard Mumford Jones

THE only really funny thing about Jorgerson was his utter seriousness. He was as solemn as a baby. Most people who knew him felt vaguely that there was something a little strange about him, but most of the people Jorgerson knew were almost as serious as he, and so couldn't tell just where his abnormality lay. Jorgerson could go to a vaudeville performance and not once laugh, not even at the audience, though he could detail everything he saw minutely and speak sagely of the place of vaudeville in the cosmic scheme. And his remarks were sometimes uncommonly neat; he had a faculty for phrasing orthodox sentiments in crisp and pregnant sentences that even a non-conformist could understand, and as a result the respectable, industrious merchants and shopkeepers with whom he associated considered him a promising young man. For me that was the humor of the situation, though at first I liked him simply for the subtle comedy of his impeccable conventionality.

I am not going to describe Jorgerson because I have no memory for faces, and his was a face that is quite easily forgotten. Take any average clerk in Chicago, and, to all practical purposes, you have Jorgerson. He was tall, I recollect, with black hair—lots of it—and neat and rather prepossessing in appearance—in short, a "nice" young man.

When I knew him he was living a placid and perfectly usual life. He went to church sometimes, worked steadily all week—he'd read Franklin in high school, and knew what happened to men diligent in business—took

the girls to dances, had no ideas except the ones he found around him, and was all in all a model beginner in business. He smoked a little—pipe and rather poor tobacco, but that was the only bad habit the older heads could accuse him of. So they continued to invite him to their houses and trust their daughters to him and waited for his bank account to grow.

Then Jorgerson fell in love. A serious-minded man either never falls in love, or else he is very hard hit. Jorgerson was hard hit—just as dips into Tennyson and Robert W. Chambers and the *Chicago Tribune* had taught him that he ought to be. She was a girl on the West Side named Margaret—Snow, I think, Margaret Snow. Anyway, it doesn't matter. I never saw her, but Jorgerson used to rave about her, how perfect she was, how unusual and fine and distinguished, so I gather that she was a nice, ordinary, middle-class American girl, the kind a man like Jorgerson ought to marry. Her father was a coal dealer in a small way, and, as I guessed, fairly prosperous. The mother I don't know anything about. Margaret herself was tall and slim—like a lily, Jorgerson said—and black-haired and blue-eyed as nearly as I could make out. I never saw any of them, you know—but, after all, it makes little difference, since she doesn't figure in this story except as a kind of personified reaction to Jorgerson's tragedy, and it's more important to know how she thought than how she looked.

From bits I pieced together, I constructed a perfectly normal mind for her, a mind whose movements in any given situation could be predicted with

the accuracy of a chronometer, and I never saw any reason to change my hypothesis during the developments which followed. Some people say that such minds are uninteresting. I find the same gripping fascination in watching their smooth movements that I have in watching the machinery on a steamship. It seems they cannot miss. They conceal some mysterious chemical which requires them to seize, out of a dozen possible explanations to any given emergency, the same, regular, plodding one. They appall me. I do not see how any human being can conceive that men act from the same motive in the same emergency time after time and never change. Their judgments are as blasting and irreparable as an accident. If a next door neighbor committed suicide, Margaret would arrive simply and firmly and ingenuously at the conclusion that the man had committed suicide, and that suicide was wrong; and she would be literally unable to comprehend that the man might have killed himself as a kind of splendid joke or as a scientific experiment or from ennui or because he didn't like the color of his wife's hat, or any other of the hundred reasons which drive actual people to actual death.

I want you to understand this thoroughly. I want you to remember that Miss Snow was a perfectly commonplace, perfectly ordinary young woman of the small merchant class, just as Jorgerson, aside from his monstrous seriousness, was a completely normal clerk. To both of them suicide was suicide and a joke was a joke and a tragedy a tragedy, and it was in this very fact that the whole ghastliness of their situation lay.

Matters ran along quite smoothly for a couple of months, with Jorgerson more tremendously and idiotically in love than ever. Perhaps Margaret loved him—I don't know. Jorgerson hinted that father and daughter rasped each other a bit—oh, nothing bad, of course, and this leads me to the conclusion that whether Margaret loved him or not, she was about ready to ac-

cept him, anyway. Marriage is the only adventure that the orthodox permit themselves; any scruples she may have had about the requisite amount of affection she must feel for her lover were probably offset by an unconfessed desire to get away from Snow. Not that Margaret ever sat down and calculated things as closely as I have, but these were probably her reasons.

I will go even further and say that I don't believe Jorgerson ever knew positively whether or not she loved him. He came to me time after time in the usual uncertainty of a lover's torment—did she love him? Could she ever care for such a fool as he was? And so on. When I suggested that it would be a very simple matter to find out, Jorgerson looked pained and a little stunned; to tell the absolute truth, I don't think a proposal had ever occurred to him, or if it had, it appeared so dimly distant in the future that it was to be put out of one's mind as something improbable and strange. He stammered that she really hadn't time to know her mind as yet, that she didn't know him, and the rest of it, but I could see that my profound wisdom in the matter of women had visibly staggered him. He had never thought that somehow he must deliberately ask the girl to marry him. To watch him grapple with the idea was ludicrous and touching. He was a coward, of course, and yet a little pathetic and perhaps even brave in his way—I don't know. I confess I cannot fathom a normal mind—a mind without crags and valleys to it. Perhaps Jorgerson preferred anguished uncertainty to a definite refusal, perhaps it was sheer funk, perhaps it was that lack of courage to dive into chilly waters which appears in another form as business prudence.

How does a man feel when he is in love—an ordinary American citizen with only a dim sense of the cosmic significance of his emotional state? I don't know. I don't know what Jorgerson thought, though he confessed to me every evening with the solemn sameness of a phonograph. I don't

know that Jorgerson knew himself—perhaps he just felt, and it was painful. I fancy he was quite swept off his feet and thoroughly frightened and getting deeper and deeper in love with Margaret every time he saw her—which was becoming frequent.

Then something happened—something spiritual smashed, whether in Jorgerson or in the Snow household, I don't know. I think Margaret and her father had a row of more than decent dimensions, to tell the truth, and that Margaret in the subtly evasive way of women made Jorgerson feel that the time for a definite statement had come. Perhaps Jorgerson merely nerved himself to act, as condemned men do, by doses of recklessness gulped down from God knows where. As I said he was a coward—that is the essence of being monotonous—so I doubt if he came to his momentous decision alone. I suspect that Margaret, manipulating the psychology of the Snow family, had brought her batteries to bear on him and forced the issue—whether to get rid of him or to be rid of her father makes little difference. At any rate Jorgerson determined to propose.

He came to see me before he went, dressed, of course, in the inevitable best suit, and with a straw hat, which continually troubled him, on his head. This was in July—a Saturday afternoon. I remember Jorgerson coming across the sunny asphalt pavement as I was standing in front of the house, running to intercept me before I went in, his round, sober eyes a little puzzled and appalled, his hands trembling. He knocked his hat off and could hardly get it on again. I took pity on him and led him into the house to collect himself.

Did I say he had false teeth? I meant to. They were the one subject on which he was absolutely uncommunicative. I speak of them now because they looked so incongruous at the time. How so young a man ever lost his teeth is as much a mystery to me now as it was then. There was a faint scar just under his chin, and I supposed he had been through some accident—that hy-

pothesis would explain his impossible seriousness. His teeth, at any rate, were the one reason why I was never sure whether Margaret loved him—though if he had proposed that afternoon I think she might have accepted him out of rage—the covert, well-modulated rage of the middle class.

He came into the house for just a moment, he said. I asked him why he was so excited.

"She's going away to-night," he blurted abruptly, then stopped and fumbled with his hat. There was no catch to it, and that bothered him. The hat seemed to have a queer, irresponsible individuality of its own—at least in his hands, though it was tractable enough in mine. Things have souls, I believe, with antipathies as strong as those of your cat or your dog. It was a new hat, bought for the occasion, and there was something touching about his evident faith in it as a hat; it had become a kind of symbol to him, a white plume, a pledge of courage.

"She's going away?" I echoed, to urge him on.

"Yes," he replied solemnly and gulped. "So I thought I'd better—"

That was all. He felt that I knew and relied on me to manoeuvre us both in the delicate situation. I was touched again—some people would have laughed. He was facing a terrible ordeal, and he was stricken beyond speech with the awfulness and the irrevocableness of it. His fright was something more than the conventional lover's panic; it was the panic of a conventional man beyond his emotional depth.

I wished him success—to hearten him and as well as I could, because of my sudden pity for the fool. He was a fool—a divine fool, full of solemn-eyed wonder and inarticulate problems. Then he shook my hand twice, reached twice for his hat, finally got it, drew himself together while his lip trembled and marched out.

For what happened after that you'll have to take my inferences—inferences drawn from what Jorgerson told me and what stray facts I was later able

to collect. The actual incident is very simple. Jorgerson rode to the loop in a Kenwood "L" and then, strangely for him, decided to walk a bit—perhaps to keep his courage from oozing away. He got off at Madison and Wabash and went west in a desperate funk. When he got to the bridge there was a jam—a boat was going through. When the draw was closed again the black ants of humanity swarmed over it with Jorgerson in their midst, alone and very much depressed. In the middle of the span a puff of wind blew up, sent by some devil out for a lark, I suppose—if so, he had it, and probably got promoted for it down below. At any rate the breeze raised Jorgerson's hat from his head with the neat dexterity of a sales clerk and started it toward the water. Jorgerson of course made a grab for it and missed, missed so hard and with such a violent wrench (you must remember he was in a highly nervous state) that somehow, he cannot himself explain it, his false teeth were loosened by the jar just as he was leaning over the rail and fell into the river. Very likely some one jostled him while he was tiptoe after his hat, and that shock, added to his own muscular jerk, did the damage.

Now reflect a moment on the ingenious hellishness of Jorgerson's predicament. A man going to propose to his sweetheart drops his false teeth in the river! Stated baldly the incident is the essence, I will not say of comedy, but of comedy as Jorgerson understood it, of vaudeville comedy, the only variety of comedy that he and Margaret knew. Properly depicted the situation would make an audience scream with laughter. The false teeth joke is one of the stock jokes of our civilization. There is, for instance, that mad yarn about the individual who stepped on his teeth and immediately thereafter contracted hydrophobia—a story that for sheer, hysterical absurdity it would be hard to match. There is the celebrated verse about the old man from Tarentum who was so unfortunate as to damage his false teeth by sitting on them, and had,

therefore, to rent a pair. There are a hundred stories. And these hundred stories are the very stories that were funny to Jorgerson and Margaret, stories they had been taught to laugh at, which they would no more have kept from laughing at than they would have danced at a funeral. If his own calamity were narrated to Jorgerson he would have found it shriekingly funny—whereas in fact it was grotesquely and bizarrely sad. Do you see the heartlessness of the joke?

For a brief moment, he said quite earnestly, he thought of advertising for them in the want columns—he even made an involuntary step in the direction of the newspaper office. That was but a flash of time; the next moment he obeyed the human instinct and cried out, or thought he did, "There go my teeth!" He tried very hard to impress me with the fact that he *did* cry out, quite solemnly and impressively like a man doing a public duty. It seemed an obvious and cheap means of recovering them. Someone would pick them up—someone always does. Doubtless he did not cry, or else he mumbled his words, for no one noticed, and strangely no one noticed the loss of his hat—the crowd was impatient because of being delayed by the boat, I presume. Then he turned back to the loop.

Hitherto his mind had been occupied with the mere punch of his loss—the first sharp thud of the bullet to which the stunned nerves were not yet recovered. Then suddenly he remembered Margaret and the mad necessity for reaching her at once and telling her to delay her departure until he could see her, gripped him and shook him like a fever. The bullet was beginning to hurt. He was, I presume, in the tremulously intense state of a man with four minutes in which to catch his train and a ticket to buy. In such moments the universe whizzes and rocks around you, and you are conscious of only one thing: in the roaring of the world past you, through the queer, futile, squeaky shadow-men who jerk in your way and jerk out again like automatons, you can

see the pulsating units of time waltz leeringly by you like a carefully regulated parade. You feel the same baffled rage that a lover feels who is forced to lose an evening with his mistress because another man has called. So it was, at any rate, I conceive Jorgerson to have felt.

He started for a drug store to telephone. The fact that he couldn't be understood without his teeth evidently didn't occur to him. His mind couldn't be reasonable in such an emergency—it must have floundered as helplessly as a fish on land. Nobody is so helpless in an emotional crisis as your plain, practical man, and Jorgerson was a plain, practical man.

He had reached a telephone when for the first time the peculiar ghastliness of the situation overwhelmed him and he suddenly realized that his loss was something he couldn't explain. The thought seems to have risen up and slapped him like a wave, and like a wave it towered over him for a moment and then rushed down in a great black torrent of misery and swallowed him up. This occurred, he said, just as he was ready to take down the receiver. His physical incapacity for speech hadn't yet come to him—you see, he had spoken only four words since his teeth fell out, but now he suddenly understood that he couldn't explain, that by no possible collocation of phrases that he knew could he make it clear what had happened.

His brain worked for once with singular clearness. He realized that to Margaret the whole thing would be farce, that it had been definitely branded farce in her education, that at first she would be incredulous and then fling down the receiver in a storm of clumsy merriment, and that afterwards she would be ashamed—without reason, as though she had exposed a part of her body. He knew that all his acquaintances would listen to his story with the cackling glee of imbeciles, and that none of them could explain for him. Furthermore, if he did not see Margaret that afternoon, since she was leaving in the morning, he would have to write—

he would have to write anyway—and on paper the incident would look even more indecent, even more shamefully funny than if it were transmitted by the warmth of the human voice.

There was still one chance. He knew little of the ways of dentists, but perhaps his dentist could in some way fit him out with a temporary set. He trudged to the Scales Building where his man had an office. He had forgotten one thing. It was Saturday afternoon and the door was locked. He was too timid to hunt up a strange dentist and tell him his story—he was ashamed of it and afraid the man would laugh just as Margaret or his cronies would have laughed.

Then he fled to me. He felt dimly that I was different, that I could see the dumb anguish of his position. He ran to me from the same instinct that leads a child to run to its mother if its garter breaks. To my shame, when he mumbled the tragedy, I smiled—unthinkingly, of course, and not at the farce of his loss, but at the lurid irony that to Jorgerson of all men this particular cataclysm should have come. It was senseless, it was stupid, it was inexcusable. He misunderstood me, got up stiffly like an old man, and went away. I know now that he felt he had lost his last friend. I was a fool, a damned, brutal fool.

I suspect that he went to his room immediately. He wanted a little decent privacy, for certain. He lived above a store on Vincennes Avenue, alone, and the privacy he obtained there must have been pleasant to experience. But this afternoon he was unfortunately left alone.

You understand that while I have had to piece all this together I still had something to work with—what I knew of him, his mumbled tale, his appearance when he started for Margaret's house and when he returned, his tiresome confidences. But from here on everything is conjecture.

I suppose that he considered every expedient. He could wait for another set of teeth to be made, trump up a

convenient lie, and write to Margaret explaining why he had not come that afternoon. He could tell the truth. Or he could keep silent and wait for her return—you remember they were still only friends so far as convention goes. I conjecture that he rejected the possibility of a lie immediately—things are fearfully right or wrong to men like Jorgerson. Perhaps he felt that the moment when his suit would have prospered had passed—that in going away, Margaret would quite literally go away from him. His mind, as I said, seems to have been illuminated quite mysteriously, so that all the shadows were darker and all the high places very light. I don't know this, of course, just as I don't know *surely* that Margaret had rowed with her father and would have accepted him that Saturday afternoon and at no time after that. But I think the fruit was ripe for him that once and only that once, and perhaps he knew it.

As for telling the truth, that possibility was to be crossed out at once. "They would all laugh at me," he told me in an awed, simple way just before I was ass enough to smile at him, and his conviction that the accident was completely a comic accident, a thing to humiliate him and make him ludicrous, was just as sincere and naïve and correct as his faith in the hat he had lost.

Finally he could do nothing—simply live henceforward without her. I fancy he pictured Margaret's succession of moods upon his non-arrival—the nascent query, the puzzled and impatient wonder, the conviction that he was not coming, that he had jilted her, the final irrevocable hurt to her vanity. Narrow-minded women jump always to the wrong conclusions in such a case. There was nothing he could do to place the truth before her—to tell her that he had not come because he had dropped his false teeth into the river from the Madison street bridge was so wildly and impossibly absurd that she would have been insulted.

I picture him in his stuffy room, pa-

cing back and forth as the heroes in the cheap magazines had taught him to do, figuring out his dilemma, haunted and baffled by his own helplessness, his sense of personal humiliation, his understanding that he never could be Margaret's husband. It must have been terrible. I picture him walking up and down and mumbling between his toothless gums, "It is too late—it is too late." To shape his conclusions as sharply as he did, he must have uttered some concrete statement. He was forced finally to the decision that henceforth he must live without Margaret—or he could die.

He made his preparations, I presume, somewhat excitedly, perhaps in a kind of fascinated delirium. You see he had brooded over the ghastly thing from two o'clock till seven. Moreover to overcome his scruples on suicide, he must have been a trifle out of his head. Perhaps he went entirely crazy—I doubt it, though; he did not have that kind of a temperament. That doesn't lessen the brutality of the thing, however. It must have been crimson agony for him to try to pierce to the hidden root of his problem with a mind that was built only for blunt perceptions. The psychology of the situation was just beyond his reach, and he knew only that he had been causelessly shamed and afterwards robbed for life, and that life without Margaret was life without self-respect. She was now, he saw, a symbol of his pride which he had lost and could never recover.

He wrote quite simply and rather inanely that he was tired of life—he was ashamed to mention the loss of his teeth, you see, even in death. He wanted his self-respect and the phrase somehow redeemed it. He had seen it in the newspaper accounts of such things, and a vague sense of his theatrical value must have struck him even in the fantastic haziness of his mind. He wrote out, besides, somewhat incoherent directions about the disposal of his money; it was to go to a cousin in Nebraska, since he had no immediate family. Then he undressed, carefully hung his coat and vest on the hanger, and

laid the trousers neatly over the back of his chair, where I found them. Why he had to take his clothes off I don't know. Then he must have pulled down the blinds and stuffed up the keyhole—it does not seem probable, somehow, that he would have done these things

in any other order. Finally he turned on the gas. . . .

And what became of Margaret? I don't know. There was no reason for summoning her to the inquest, you see, so I never saw her. She married, I suppose. . . .



WHY DO PEOPLE ALWAYS SCREAM WHEN THEY ARE RUN OVER BY THE STREET CAR?

WHY do people always scream when they are run over by the street car? When I am absorbed in thoughts on the importance of a municipal board of censorship for the movies, their harsh yells rudely make me conscious of my sordid environment. When the squeaking wheels of the boisterous trolley grind into their bodies, why are they not more considerate than to call the attention of the public to this disgusting sight? It almost looks as though they are so stupid as to believe that the motorman has permission to stop the car any place he wants to and not only at crossings. Why do they scream?



HOPE

By Richard R. Newbold

IF there is a heaven
I hope it is a place
Where there are strong men to love as comrades,
And women with soft arms.

I hope there will be work and books and singing,
And children on the street.
I hope there will be stars and autumn,
And plenty of good ale
And time to think—
And no damned preachers.



THE QUARREL

By Charles Hanson Towne

IN a house behind me in the crowded city
I heard a man and woman quarreling.
He called her shocking names, and she replied
With bitter expletives that I forget.
I only know I never dreamed such words
Could fall from human lips, as high and higher
Their angry voices rose in sudden wrath.
And then I heard a blow—a sounding fist—
And shuddered at the silence following,
A silence far more terrible than the storm.
Heads leaned from windows; all the neighborhood
Wondered, as I had wondered, what it meant.

Next day I saw the young wife in the yard,
Hanging out linen—shirts and handkerchiefs,
And then brown socks and heavy underclothes.
Upon one cheek she bore a purple mark,
And I had never thought to see a face
So tragic in a woman as young as she.
And in a moment the brawny husband came
With a white empty crib and cans of paint;
And while the woman pinned the clothing up,
He set to work with brushes for an hour.
And every little while she spoke to him:
“It’s going to look real nice, Sam.” “Yes,” said he.
Or, “After that suppose you fetch some coal—
I think the fire needs it.” “All right, Kate. . . .
Let’s have a steak for supper.” “Sure we will.”
And presently, when she was going in,
I saw her put her hand upon his shoulder,
And he looked up and smiled.

I turned away,
And marveled at this life, but most of all
At love, and the strange riddle of the world.



WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND

By McHarg Davenport

THERE was once a woman so beautiful and so wise that it was said there was nothing a man might say or do that she could not easily understand. And for this reason she had never been able to marry, since the gods, taking offense at her boastful contempt for men, had forbidden her to wed, until one appeared who was clever enough to do something which she could not understand.

But though scholars had sought to humble her with questions of great learning; statesmen to trick her mind with matters of worldly affair, and lovers to excite her passion with mad, incomprehensible advances, none had met with the slightest success.

And the fame of this woman's beauty and intellect was carried far and wide until it came at last to the ears of a little widowed cobbler, bending all day long at his most unimaginative trade in his shop in a neighboring kingdom. And having been married in turn to two of the prettiest women in his village, and being of an observing nature, it might well be said that he had learned something about women.

At any rate he smiled dryly when he heard of the haughty beauty whose understanding had never yet been baffled, and thinking that his shop would be made more cheerful and trade attracted by her charms, he put a little sign up over the door announcing his speedy return and marched off across the fields towards the kingdom of Moravia, where she lived. And on arriving there he announced himself at once a suitor for her hand, and did not hesitate to declare that on that and the three follow-

ing days he would do something which she, with all her womanly wisdom, could not possibly understand. And when she heard his boastful manifesto the woman smiled her hard, cold smile, and gave orders that he be brought into her presence without delay.

So that very afternoon the little cobbler shambled into the castle and up to the throne whereon the beauty sat in royal state. And when he stood before her she looked down icily and bade him state his business without delay, while a hush fell over the courtiers as with one accord they listened to hear the question this so boastful suitor was going to propound. But the little cobbler paused only long enough to take in the woman on the throne with one swift, appraising glance, and then passed on without uttering a word.

And when he had gone the beauty frowned and announced sharply that she would grant no more audiences that day. And that night her maids found her standing for a long time before her favorite mirror with such a look in her blue eyes as they had never seen before.

The next afternoon as she sat in the throne room one could think of nothing but two exquisite cornflowers set in a golden vase. For her eyes were the warm azure of Mediterranean skies, and her glorious hair poured yellow as maize across her shoulders and down well below her waist. And the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting, accustomed as they were to her great beauty, stood in wonder at the sight of her that day.

Late in the afternoon, the last of a round dozen of suitors to thread the castle's corridors, the little cobbler

sauntered in. And this time when he stood before her throne she smiled pleasantly and inquired in a gentle voice if there was something of which he cared to ask? And immediately the people all about were still lest they should miss a word of what he had to say. But the little cobbler stopped only long enough to take in their mistress with one swift glance, and then passed on without making reply.

Ah, what a temper the maids found the woman in that night! Nothing would satisfy her but she must have all her great wealth of gowns spread out for her to see. And when the walls of two great rooms were hidden beneath a mass of soft and marvelously colored silks, and other stuffs from which the pleasant mystery of women's gowns is spun, she found not one in all the lot which suited her, but ordered her dressmakers to sit up all the night fashioning a gown of undreamed gorgeousness.

The next afternoon the gloomy old castle fairly radiated with the magic of the woman's beauty. And as she sat in the throne room awaiting the coming of her strange suitor, afternoon's gay colors faded into twilight, and twilight gave way to the somber shades of night. When at last the cobbler came it was with the air of one who has an unpleasant duty to perform. And this time the beautiful woman, with warmly colored cheeks looked at him from dangerously tender eyes. "Is there not something you would ask of me, my friend?" she asked sweetly.

And at once the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting ceased their chatter lest they miss what he should say. But the cobbler's thoughts seemed leagues away, and halting only long enough to glance into the woman's eyes, he turned on his heel and hurried off as silent as before.

No sooner had he left the room than the woman frowned and bit her lips. Then dismissing all but her most trusted maid, she led the way through a secret passage into a secret room wherein the finest mirrors of the known world were treasured carefully away. Here it was she came to spend hours at a

time, happy in their silent admiration. Now gazing at her own fair face reflected on a plaque of polished silver; now floating like some exquisite human poppy in pools of diamond-bright water caught up in great golden bowls. And when she had stared at herself for some moments in all of them, her eyes began to clear of their anxiety.

"Did any of you notice that I was not looking quite myself this afternoon?" she pouted. But the maids were of one accord that she had never appeared more beautiful or been gowned so bewitchingly. And though the woman knew in her heart that this was so, her mind was sorely troubled none the less, and she commanded her dressmakers to create overnight a gown whose loveliness would surpass anything their imaginations had as yet conceived.

The next day indeed she came into the throne room looking like the queen of fairies, so skilfully had the new gown been fashioned of the rarest rainbow stuffs. The courtiers who had stared the day before stood as men spellbound before the wonder of her new loveliness, and one and all waited with the greatest impatience the coming of the little man whose strange conduct their mistress must solve that day, or by the ruling of the gods become his wife.

But morning passed and afternoon and evening's star-embroidered curtain fallen like a tapestry of dreams over the castle walls, and still the little cobbler did not come. And when at last the woman could stand the suspense no longer she caused messengers to be dispatched in search of him. But when they came upon the cobbler and told him that his interview with their mistress was overdue, and that he must make haste to follow them at once unless he wished to forfeit all assumption to her hand, he looked up impatiently from the pile of rushes upon which he had been lying half-asleep and bade them bother him no further, but go about some more important business.

And when the woman heard what he had said an awful fear possessed her, so that she called the captain of her

guard and bade him return at once and offer the cobbler such weight of gold to come as he could not refuse. Then immediately the officer was gone she caused all the torches throughout the castle to be put out and the heavy curtains of the oriental room drawn back, so that of light there was none but the silver radiance of the moon. Next, four strangely fashioned braziers were lit to fill the air with sweet perfume, while last of all she ordered four of the sweetest singers and players in the kingdom to conceal themselves close by.

Hardly had everything been prepared when the captain of the guard returned breathless and alone. "He still refused to come?" The woman's head swam dizzily. "Nay, my lady," replied the guard, "but at such a pace as I."

"And what said he?" she asked, her eyes filling with a sudden secret joy.

The guard reddened. "That gold was something he could not reasonably refuse, and that an you'd be quick and not detain him overlong, he'd be here presently." And on the instant the woman's face grew hard once more, and she dismissed him with scant courtesy; then gave orders that when the cobbler came he should be brought direct to her.

And when the cobbler reached the castle he was taken straightforth to the room wherein the beautiful woman awaited him, and there abandoned. The rapid footfalls of his guide echoing hollow in the still night air, told him only too plainly that the interview was this time to be a thing of deepest secrecy.

Then as he entered the room the gentle murmur of women's voices and soft-thrummed instruments came sweet as ecstasies of love upon his ears. And the woman reclining languorously among the silken cushions on her divan looked up at him with eager and beseeching eyes, and inquired in a voice of heart-breaking tenderness if there was not something of which he wished to ask? Not a charm of face or body but was hers, and the falling moonlight warmed to a marvelous whiteness the ivory of her skin, and brightened

the glorious sapphire of her eyes. And now with the heavy air sweeter than kisses with incense, and the sensuous music of hidden violins to fill the mind with amorous dreams, her beauty was increased tenfold. Good reason had she to wait with eager confidence for the man's reply.

But seemingly oblivious to all for which the picture stood, the little cobbler only stared at her boredly for a moment, and then turned away without a word. At the same time from afar off came the sound of a great clock, striking the midnight hour, and the woman's heart fairly ceased to beat, for at the twelfth stroke the last day given her in which to fathom the suitor's strange behavior would be over. And then of a sudden her great eyes filled with tears, and she pressed the soft satin of her hand in swift and poignant entreaty on the man's coarse red fist. "Oh, sire, before it is too late," she cried, "is there nothing you would ask of me; for an you ask, it shall be yours?"

But the cobbler's only answer was to draw away his hand and walk with cruel unconcern out of the room. And with the sounding of the last stroke of twelve her courtiers and attendants flocked the halls, to learn from her own lips how she had solved her suitor's riddle. And they found her alone, staring with a tearful radiance at the sharp sickle of a moon hanging without.

The captain of the guard bowed low. "My lady has understood the actions of this man as easily as all the others?" he inquired eagerly. But the woman signed for him to rise, and bade him in a strangely humble voice seek out the man who had but just quitted the room. "And when you find my lord and master," she said with sweet humility, "say that I shall be ready in the morning, to follow him whither he wills."

And the guard stared as one who sees a miracle, and the people all about could scarcely credit the words their ears had caught. But the little cobbler only smiled wisely when he heard, for he long had known the one thing a beautiful woman can never understand.

A LIQUID LAY

By Helene Hicks Bowen

- O THE Darling Drinks that dwell in my mind,
O the Lovely Liquors that lilt in my memory.
- O the Coy Cocktails so chill and so clear, like melted epigrams with the sting left in.
- O the Beer Beautiful, bourgeois bumper of bliss, like a sturdy parvenu made juicy.
- O Roustabout Rum so rowdy and rollicking, distilled essence of good cheer.
- O the Wild Whiskies fraught with wittiness and wrath;
Reckless Rye raw and ravishing, like an alluring woman with an evil temper;
Smoky Scotch smooth and sappy, the sprite of energy steeped to a syrup.
- O the Gentle Gin gladly golden:
Racy Rickies, refreshing, recherché, like dissolved comfort flavored with limes.
Fascinating Fizzes, flower-flavored and fine; first love blown into bubbles.
- O the Wonder Wines whirling with witchery, like fluid cocottes aswirl with desire.
- O the Soft Sherries so subtly sophisticated, like a man's sweetheart fused in his wife.
- O the Brimming Burgundies breathing bouquet, like a lush Tantalus coaxing to thirst.
- O the Ripe Rhine Wines rarely reviving, like a tipple of good resolutions rinsing the mouth.
- O the Chic Champagnes, charming, capricious, pearled passion rippling in liquefied amber.
- O the Cunning Cordials, caviare to the cautious, like drops of sin from Satan's saucy heart.
- O the Darling Drinks that dwell in my mind,
O the Lovely Liquors that lilt in my memory.

And I have rheumatism!



A PLEA FOR MORE MALICE

By Frank Pease

In his narrow monastic cell the Sage lay a-dying. About him hovered the shades of Rabelais and of Whistler, of Baudelaire and Heinrich Heine, of Machiavel and of Oscar Wilde, of Tallemand and Swinburne, Blake and Rochefoucauld, Voltaire and Ernest Hello, of Lord Byron and of Nietzsche. The gray old Sage lifted himself on his elbow and viewing these assembled lovers of mankind, murmured More Malice! Then he sank back and les ministres de la mort éternelle bore away to the Heaven where fools shall not enter, be they never so holy, his immortal part. But within the stone walls of renunciation, the Sage's death-cry lingered reverberating: More Malice! More Malice!

—Contes Contemporains.

OF course one is forced to realize that to-day most people are far too much occupied with themselves to be malicious. What a pity that the malicious epigram has gone the way of the Borgian stiletto and the tiny crystals beneath the scarabeus of lapis lazuli! And since the wisdom and goodness of Galen would not leave unto the world too subtle a theory of poisons, the ignorant have ever since had to be contented with sublimate and arsenic, which has had its levelling effect also upon true wit and malice. For, as Nietzsche knew, there is no better way to acquire spirit and become subtle than by the genial practice of malice in the light of its great artists. To hate a person or an institution, not with a blind reaction to stimulus but with *finesse*, with conscious intent, with *nuance*, is—as Swift wrote of Lady

What's-her-Name—"a liberal education."

The last of the Borgians was Whistler. And now that the artists have gone, only the British remain. 'Tis flat, stale and unprofitable to beat one's butterfly wings against that stone wall, as Whistler knew only too well. 'Tis a sad day for Ireland when there is none to wield the shillelah. 'Tis a sad day for Ireland when there are no more heads to hit. I might possibly knit for the Belgians, but I would not weep for them. They put Paul Verlaine in jail, snubbed Baudelaire, and were cordially hated by Stendhal. Is that not enough? For whosoever shall offend one of these, 'twere far better that a millstone or something equally heavy were tied about their collective neck. Prejudice? I shall have to quote Ronsard's saucy words to his lady-love:

*Ne fuyez pas sans parler: je voy bien
A vos regards que vous le voulez bien.*

And remember if there be no great love in the beginning, malice—like Heaven—may decrease it upon better acquaintance.

Yet how limit one's audience? "To the Happy Few," wrote Stendhal and happily few, an echo of the old Roman poet's "Equitibus Cano." But when, as Heine said, "We are now all equal, may God have pity on us," how can one be certain that one is singing only to the nobles, to the happy few alone, that magical one hundred, or better still the ten superior persons of Huysmans. To advertise one's words of wisdom as "for all and none" is, as Nietzsche began to realize when he viewed his first

"fish," equivalent to putting out an S.R.O. sign for a bad play. And I haven't yet decided that this shall be a bad play! Ah, well, I'll begin at once to censor my subject, hoping thereby to censor my audience.

There are many kinds of malice for which I would not make a plea; the malice of the fool which, while flat, yet in its very flatness has an edge that is two-sided: the malice of all efficient persons whether charwomen or critics: the malice of latter-day Pharisees who thank the gods they are even as those they go out to reform: the malice of old people who lie in the pale sun of their past egotisms: the cruel and atavistic malice of children: the malice of unmated persons: the malice of lawyers—would you hang? then get a good lawyer: the malice of clerks and other bureaucratic pettifoggers: the malice of all *fish-frauen* (Lady Burton) and *fish-menschen* (Karl Heine). Nor am I here concerned with either the profound malice of the sisters three—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—or the superficial Aristophanic malice of the buffoons of all the ages; the malice of inanimate things, or the synthetic malice of events; but with *fin-de-siècle* malice, above all with aristocratic malice, which ever delightfully makes of the Statue of the Sorrow that Endureth for Ever, an Image of the Pleasure that Abideth for a Moment.

We are all agreed that there is to-day in America an altogether too literal adoption of the literary dictum of that bewhiskered son of an English canon that "sweetness and light" are and should be the component parts of "literature" as they are of "life" (!) What both our life and literature need is not "More Light" but "More Edge." The psycho-analyst has recently told us that turning the other cheek is but a method of vicarious atonement sanctified by usage. For the majority of people, turning the other cheek is to be commended; it is vastly easier than turning a trenchant epigram. For when opportunity plus necessity = epigram, it also = brains. Machiavelli

contended this. There are two ways of contesting, he said; the one proper to men, the other to beasts. He notes that Achilles was given to the Centaur Chiron to nurse. To-day when man's first law is unto himself, he must needs temper the beast within by nursing himself on the subtle writings of Machiavelli. *Voilà!*

Oscar Wilde once bemoaned the decay of lying as one of the essential truths about masks. I bewail the simple fact that the gentle art of making enemies is a lost art. You remember the episode in the Grosvenor Gallery—wasn't it—when Whistler said something Oscar coveted:

"I wish to heavens, Whistler, I'd said that myself."

To which the artist replied:

"You will, Oscar, you will—in time."

The gauntlet was thrown in that duel of wit in which Atlas was referee, and all literary London was the passionate bystander. I could describe to you that duel from the preliminary "En garde!" of Oscar to the savage lunge of Jimmy, the poor wrist work but good recovery of both; Oscar's *riposte* and Whistler's triumphant "Touché" with his malicious remarks anent Kossuth and Mantalini after the foils had been dropped, were it not that the duel is well known to you. One must remember, both artists—Wilde and Whistler—passionately loved one mistress—Art. That is why they were such excellent and such pictorial antagonists. For in Whistler's gentle art, much love is needed. This is why it is a lost art. In our modern and maudlin self-interest and caution we have forgot how to love in the grand manner of the Renaissance. And so we no longer remember how to hate.

A great German once wrote of passing-by: "Wo man nicht mehr lieben kann, da soll man—vorübergehen!" Yet what a consistent disproof Nietzsche was of his own words. "I have loved Richard Wagner," he wrote, and there follows this a superb piece of malice in Nietzsche's discussion of Wagner's Orientalism. And how much poorer would our anthology of malice be,

had he not—instead of “passing-by”—stopped to hurl an epithet. His *Vielzu-Vielen* (Much-too-Many); *Rein-Erkennender* (Immaculate Perceivers); *Seiltänzer* (Rope-Dancers); *Hinterweltler* (Backworldsmen); *Tarantel* (Tarantula), and his *Kater auf dem Dächern* are more necessary than most words in the German language. Nor should one forget the Corsican's contemptuous “*Che coglione*” while passing-by under the balcony of the Tuileries when he saw Louis XVI don the red cap of the Revolution, the same Corsican who is credited with such profound hatred of the French people that he led them from their homes and marched them all over Europe allowing them to present him with a thrice more kingly crown than Louis ever doffed for the *sans-culottes*!

Ça ira! The man of malice is the man of destiny. He can always get what he wants and say what he pleases. 'Tis his prerogative. For while alive he is never the one “whom privacy makes innocent and when he dies makes no commotion among the dead.” Nietzsche hazarded the opinion that the reason for the great age of European sovereigns of the 18th century was their fear of meeting Napoleon and the attending “commotion” in the next world.

The Backworldsmen, above all the Backworldswomen of the 20th century, seem to be actuated but by one impulse and that is, to make no commotion either among the living or among the dead. Their Oriental passivity has somehow reached the stage of non-resistance where they affirm, rather insist: But we are neither philosophers nor kings but ordinary parties to the social contract. True, one might ask, but why insist upon it? why ordinary? why insist upon *that*? Did not malice come all the more sweetly from the Grecian profile of Mme. Récamier, and barbed wit from Mme. de Staël? If the protestant be male, and vocal with fear lest malice and its practice endanger his social pastime, I would remind him that the only man women will go

to the ends of the earth for—or what is vastly more important—with—is one whose tyranny over them is as absolute and as nihilistic as that of Antony over Cleopatra. There is the ever-memorable example of Talleyrand de Périgord. No man was ever more malicious or more ruthless with the ladies; no man was ever more madly loved. Consider, I pray, the urn of Cordelia.

You remember the story? Ten days after Talleyrand had left Germany he received in Paris a small urn of alabaster bearing this inscription:

“The ashes of Cordelia de S. born Princess de H. bequeathed to Citizen Charles Maurice Talleyrand. *Memento mori!*”

Yes: she had done it. Those were the days! And what did Talleyrand do? The urn reached him in Paris the middle of December, 1796, and on Christmas day he lost urn, ashes, and “*memento mori*” to Chevalier Fénélon at faro. His biographer was puzzled about only one thing. Why the delay? In the light of modern man's pastime, it might perhaps be unkind to insinuate that just possibly Talleyrand was worth it. After all a man who could consistently keep his head upon his shoulders under Louis, the Red Terror, the Directory, the Consulate, Napoleon, the Bourbon and the Second Empire had no need of a heart. What, forsooth, were an urnful of Princess's ashes more or less to this man of malice. The ladies loved it. They always do! It was the superlative feline they bowed to in Talleyrand. His malice had no bounds to its knowledge. And no pity.

Malicious joy is devilish, Schopenhauer insists. Perhaps: but not for that reason less delightful nor less desirable. The psycho-analyst to the rescue! Pity, he asserts, aims just as little at the pleasure of others as malice at the pain of others. All pleasure *per se* is neither good nor evil; whence should come the decision that in order to have pleasure ourselves we may not cause displeasure to others? *Qu'importe?* Schopenhauer's untranslatable German word

schadenfreude is given a new flair in the maxim of LaRochefoucauld:

"In the adversity of our best friends we always find something which does not displease us."

Selah!

Examples of malice are like golden apples on platters of silver. Like the teachings of Montaigne, they rid us of foolishness, *ils desenseignent la sottise*. And they serve us well in time of need. Never lady lived—however coy, uncertain, hard to please—who could resist Ronsard's terse line to his little *bourgeoise*: "Be therefore kind my love, whilst thou art fair." Remember William Blake's comforting: "The fool shall not enter Heaven be he never so holy." Or the simple aristocratic creed of the poet Landor: "I strove with none for none was worth my strife." Or Voltaire's crisp: "The first prophet was the first rogue that met the first fool." Or Swinburne's chant:

*"We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."*

Perhaps the wisest saying of that wise man, Epicurus, was: "That which the people disapproves must be right." Indeed it is in his reaction to the mob that we recognize the aristocrat from the pretender. For to the aristocrat the mob does not exist but as an instrument to be played upon by the individual. Hamilton knew it. And Whistler. Root knows it. So does Thomas Fortune Ryan. These be strong words, I know, in this country where we are now all equal, may God have pity on us. And yet some of us know that the knowledge necessary to a Prince which Machiavelli put into the book which has been much decried by the timid and much consulted by the high-spirited reads almost like an American politician's Field Book for the year 1916!

"Men are so simple and so subject to present necessities that he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived" is reminiscent of P. T. Barnum's witticism. If one marvels at the hardy endurance of some of our headliners in the matter of going to church, one has but to recall that the great Italian asserts that the *show* of religion is as necessary to the Prince as the reality of it is *harmful*. It is for the individual that Rabelais framed his Gargantuan motto: "Fay ce que Vouldras" and not for what Sir Thomas Browne called: "that numerous piece of monstrosity which taken asunder, seem men and the reasonable creatures of God, but confused together, make but one great beast and a monstrosity more prodigious than Hydra."

A Borgian stiletto is not necessary to cut a cabbage-head. George Moore has it: "The philanthropist is the Nero of modern times."

The French have a word for it, "pavé." Mob-malice is *toujours pavé*. Like the bear in the fable who, wishing to frighten away a blue-bottle fly from the face of his sleeping friend, took a paving-stone to hurl at the fly with the results we know to the friend.

Whistler's book of *bête* remarks made upon his art by certain mob critics which he ironically collected into a volume which he called *The Voice of a People* is not equal to the sallies of his tongue upon other artists or his friends. An artist-creator must have foemen worthy the steel of his malice. When Butterfly signed his work with a sting, there is malice that is precious. To thoroughly understand what save those cards to the private view of the famous Peacock Room were to its creator, one must read the admirable account of it by Whistler's friend, Arthur Symons, who tells us of the shrine the artist made for his exquisite "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine," a room in which every inch of the wall ceiling, and wainscoting, the doors, frames of the shutters, was worked—as Symons tells

us—into the scheme of blues and golds, the gold peacocks on the shutters, the gold peacocks on the blue leather of the wall facing the painting, the sombre phantasy of the peacocks' feathers above the lamps of the ceiling made: "a room into which nature, sunlight, or any mortal compromise could never enter, a wizard's chapel of art." You remember the outcry of Mr. Leyland, owner of the thousand pounds' worth of beautiful red Cordoban leather which the artist had lovingly painted out! You remember the outcry of the dénouement, the cards to the private view sent out by Whistler on the wall opposite the "Princesse," the superb malice of the one peacock smothered in a shower of golden shekels, the other peacock prancing in triumph. All was then over but the laughing among artists at the father-in-law of the Royal Academician, and the portraying of Mr. Leyland as a many-tentacled devil at a piano. Truly, the last of the Borgians was Whistler!

Many times the malice we are seeking is found more in the act than in the epigram by which the act is accompanied. Joris-Karl Huysmans and his *gamin* from the Paris gutters comes to mind, the *gamin* whom for a day Huysmans taught to find indispensable, fine clothes, cigarettes, even a little silk-clad cocotte, and the finest of Chateau Lafitte, and then thrust back into the gutter again with the laconic: "I shall look for your name in the Police Gazette, my friend." Again in Huysmans' *Sac-à-dos* which has never been translated into English, one sees the white flame of the man's passion for "those tattered and contemptible regiments" whom Sir Thomas Browne loved because they would die at the command of a sergeant. Pity is here as close to malice, and malice as close to pity as the psychiatrist would have us believe.

In Eleanora Dusé—to me the only great woman alive to-day—the subtlest malice is akin to the profoundest pity. Dusé once said to Symons: "If I had my will, I would live in a boat in the middle of the sea and never come near

er to humanity than that!" It is Dusé, too, who said:

"To save the theater, the theater must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague. They poison the air. They make art impossible."

And again of the audience:

"The drama dies of stalls and boxes and evening dress, and people who come to digest their dinner."

Dusé it is who loves art so devotedly that she hates with bitter hatred the mockery of her own stage art and when she acts, pulls up all the rags of her own soul and flings them in the face of her public in a contemptuous rage. Hers is neither self-interest nor caution. In her Petrarca's noble line is fulfilled:

*"Che l' antico valore
Negli italici cuor non é ancor morto."*

She is the spiritual descendant of Italian princes of the Renaissance, but she must needs renounce instead of fulfill her passions. In this age, she is its one grand glorious surprise. And—more than other women—she knows how to love, for she has never lost the remembrance of how to hate!

Atheistic malice seems to me to have been too frightfully overdone since Jean Jacques. It is after all so simple a matter to attack one who—as Stendhal wittily observed—has as his only excuse the fact that he does not exist. Atheists are rarely artists: they are Calvinists with a different label. I therefore put such malice in Ernest Hello's category of things which are "low." You remember Hello despised plastic beauty, order, logic, wit, common sense—all that was *low*. But I can enjoy with you and with the courtiers of Charles IV of Spain, Goya's *murale* in the Church of San Antonio de la Florida at Madrid of Saint Anthony restoring to life a dead man that he may reveal to the excited multitude the

name of a murderer and so relieve the Saint's father from the charge! I like too the pleasant malice of the artist's white stockings at the Court mourning quickly covered by royal command, but with what? Caricatures of the court in pen and ink! Goya often reminds one of Talleyrand whose contemporary he was, but never more than in his treatment of the ladies, for example, his first patron, the Countess of Benavente, who hardly relished the episode of the "Maja Desnuda" and the younger Duchess of Alba. But Wilde has put it all in an epigram: "The fact that a man is a prisoner has nothing to do with his prose," nor his art, nor his genius, not even his battles with the world, the devil, and all that tempted Saint Anthony.

Personally, I like the malice of George Moore's "corrupt simplicity": the malice of Mona Lisa's enigma in the smile that Leonardo painted: the malice of Machiavelli's ethics: the malice of Benvenuto Cellini's bickerings: the malice of Heine's impious death-bed jest—"God will forgive me, *c'est son métier*": the malice of Veuillot whose delight was in cursing, who clothed himself in cursing as in a garment, as in his famous paradox on the holiness of dirt in *Les Odeurs de Paris*: the malice of A. E.'s *bon mot*—which Moore gives us—that a literary movement consists in five or six people who live in the same town and hate each other cordially: the malice of Barbey d'Aurevilly's prophecy to Huysmans that *A. Rébours* would lead him to *La Cathédrale*: the malice of Castruccio's Roman toga on the front of which was embroidered—"I am what God wills," and on the back, "What God desires shall be": the malice of Baudelaire's query about the curs in America and the cemetery: the malice—still speaking of our own country—of Sir Thomas Browne's preference for Harvey's *De Circul. Sang.* to the discovery of Columbus: the malice of Stendhal's picture of the reversed engines of Christianity, and the *nuance* of his sweet malicious smile in his portraits in black and white: the malice of

Huysmans' "Des Esseintes" comment that there must be something wrong with even Rembrandt since such hopeless people admire him: the malice of Bruyère's description of Fontenelle's shop for custom-made poetry: the malice of Saint Simon's gossip of Louis XIV's courtiers who quarreled over questions of precedence even at the Communion Table: the malice of Houdon's bust of Voltaire, Houdon of whom Rodin said he was as witty as the Duke de Saint Simon but more magnanimous: the malice of the jibe of Dumas *fils* at Léconte de Lisle for his eternal aspiration to the "impassable peace of the dead," when he asked him if such peace were not within his grasp: the malice of Baudelaire's lines to his mistress (for there are some things about which no woman permits herself to think):

*"Alors, o ma Beauté, dites la vermine
Qui vous mangerez de baisers,
Que j'ai gardé la forme et l'essence di-
vine
De mes amours décomposés!"*

Forgotten are the hosts of others whom privacy made innocent and who when they died made no commotion among the dead. But the story of Kriemhild's revenge of the death of Siegfried and her cry as she welcomed the Rhineguests to her high-tide—"Now for the reckoning" has gone echoing a-down the centuries since the fall of the Nibelung's. Forgotten are other heroes and their deeds but not the malice of Achilles, Peleus' son, who, at the very moment when Andromache was bidding her hand-maidens put over the fire a tripod that Hector might have warm washing upon his return from battle, had harnessed to his chariot wheels the body of Priam's son, and round under the walls of Troy had dragged the body of Hector, his fair hair all grimed with dust. Forgotten are other Sultans, but not the moody Schahriar who listened—ah! how he listened for One Thousand and One Nights and who then only lacked

strength of will to slay the Queen Schéhérezade—for her talking!

But though the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and the *memento mori* be lost at faro, and the *largesse* of the Grand Monarch be left in LaFontaine's rented carriage, and the weariness of age-old passion of

Proserpine's garden become for an instant the histrionism of happiness, there is but one way to enjoy one's being loyally, and that is *Malice*.

In this age of Striking Dress but, alas, not Pointed Manners, malice is the one thing left us which is pictorial.



I AM A WOMAN

By Peter Turchon

I AM a woman; I cannot call to him;
 I must not fly to him.
 And when we meet I sit demure,
 Though I tremble to his touch,—
 Liquid fire within me urges riot
 Of my outward calm.—I must be cold:
 I must not rush to him. I am a woman!
 Could I grow bold and speak—
 If I could but fling my life at his feet,—
 All my love, my thoughts, my being.

But if I betray by look or word,
 I die—for he is lost to me.
 If I pursue, the hunted look
 Of the shy, wild thing that
 Has played too close to danger
 Will cross his face—and he is gone!
 I die a living death, a thousand agonies!
 While I sit cold as a stone
 And smile!



AT all events, selfishness has this great merit: it protects one from the sting of ingratitude.



FRIENDSHIP between two women is always a plot against some third woman.

WHY IS IT?

By Margery Land Mason

WHY is it that my heart throbs quicker when I see you on the street? I have loved and forgotten you long ago. Why is it that on moon-hushed nights I lie by the side of my husband smelling again the fragrance of your cigarettes, feeling again the strength of your arms about me, and the pressure of your lips on mine? I do not love you any more. I cannot respect you. I know that you boast of your conquests over women. I know that you have no ambition, no ideals, no high plane of thought or living. Sometimes, when I realize how near I came to being yours, I snuggle close to the man I married and thank God for the safe harbor of his love. And yet, when I remember the gentle brutality of your lean hands as they caressed my

neck and throat, when I remember how useless it was to ward off the fierce rain of your kisses, when I look again into the somber depths of your passionate, flashing eyes, my being quivers. The song of a nightingale, the gleams of the stars, the fragrance of carnations, make my breath catch, make me grope in vain for the shelter of your arms, for your long kisses, for the delicious strength of you. I have the wealth and the adoration of a husband whom I, in turn, look up to and love. I have the respect of the world, I have an enviable position in society. I have influence and affluence. I wouldn't change places with any one I know. Yet sometimes I envy your wife the kisses you give her—and your arms. Why is it? I loved and forgot you long ago.



EVERY woman dies twice: the day that she ceases to breathe and the day that she ceases to suspect her husband.



PERSPICACITY;—the name we give to the mistakes we make that turn out well.



WHEN a woman wants you to make love to her, she will show you when and how.

LILIES TOO

By Helen Drake

A TAXI was hurrying the girl from one depot to the other of the great city. She wore a subdued though not altogether unhappy look. She seemed perfectly sure of herself and of what she was going to do. More than once she opened a slim gold cigarette case and took out a piece of yellow paper headed "Western Union" and containing the words "Mertoun died Friday night. Funeral Monday, two P.M.," and signed "Anne Dyer." That was all! She glanced at her wrist watch. Yes, she could easily make the through train to Portland and change there.

For she was going to travel hundreds of miles to an out-of-the-way little place to hear someone pronounce "Dust to dust—ashes to ashes" over all that was mortal of Mertoun Dyer. She had left in the middle of the Carrington's house party—just when she was having a winning streak, too. This "far journey" into a strange land, among strangers, struck her as being rather creditable to her feelings. Not that it wasn't entirely fitting and perhaps due. For she had stood for all that was most charming and worthiest to him. Even his best friends and her worst rivals admitted as much. And he—he had been always a "perfectly wonderful friend" and a "dear, dependable sort." She sighed, and hoped for a lower berth.

She was not so much grief-stricken as stunned. It was the incongruity of the thing that struck her. That anyone so nonchalant toward Life, so ready to take the cash and let the credit go, and withal so physically fit should be thus suddenly winked out! The taxi rolled smoothly up the Avenue, gliding past places of poignant remembrances. They

had lunched here many times; he had sent her a pin from that jeweler's once; and she had often had his flowers from that florist shop. There went an old-fashioned hansom cab. He had rather affected hansoms because they reminded him of London. He liked to ride up the Avenue in one when he "couldn't decide which to look at first—the new models in cars or the pretty girls in new models!" And right about here he had proposed once—but then he proposed regularly. And once he had said tentatively in a jest, "When you marry me we'll go to live at the St. Croix!" She looked again at her watch. "Drive around by the St. Croix," she said.

Of course she had always told him that she was sorry, but she didn't think she could ever care. And that was square enough, wasn't it? Of course, when he had asked if there was anyone else she had always said, "No." She could not tell him, could she, that there was always "someone else," but that the "someone else" varied from week to week, almost? She thought of the "someones"—college boys, light-hearted youngsters mostly, a poet, a polo player, a settlement worker—the usual run, in fact. She had chipped off small pieces of her personality for each one of them. To Mertoun Dyer she had given nothing. Why? Perhaps she had realized that to his idealism it must be all or nothing. But his thousand thoughtful or extravagant kindnesses to her crowded her memory.

The taxi stopped. The girl stood on the sidewalk irresolutely, looking into the huge cavernous depot. She pictured herself in her extreme frock and flower-laden hat in that sedate New

England town. She saw those quiet-eyed women who sorrowed for a lost son—a lost brother.

"So this," they would say, "is the woman who did not love him!"

No! She could not go—she could not face their grief. All at once it seemed an impossible thing to do. Any sorrow that she might feel would only be a mockery of theirs.

"To the St. Croix again," she told the chauffeur.

Once at the St. Croix she went direct to the flower stand. The flowers at the St. Croix were known on two continents. Violets had been his favorites—lilies were hers, strangely enough.

"Violets—oh, quite a lot," she said in reply to an obsequious question. And she poured out her bridge winnings of the night before. But perhaps he would like something of *her* about them. Well, she could give him that. So she said, "Lilies, too."



SONG FOR A SPRING NIGHT

By Orrick Jones

THE passion of Spring is on me—
The street is a shining moor,
The crowds are flowers swaying,
And the wind a door!

Oh, nights of joy and wonder!
Oh, windy nights a-flare!
I ride upon your plunging decks
I know not where!

The long white sweep of pavement
Is the wake of a ship at sea—
The passion of Spring is on me,
And I am free!



THE truth is a collection of the lies that were easiest to believe.



A PRETTY girl is one who would be still prettier if she could forget it.



CONSCIENCE is a mother-in-law who never goes home.

THE INTERVENER

By Frederick Fenn

THE room was only dimly lighted; that is to say, a red shaded lamp stood on the table, while two more lamps, similarly shaded, on the walls, shed a soft, warm lustre. The place looked snug, luxurious and perhaps rather sensuous. On the polished mahogany table, which reflected the red glow, stood a liqueur stand and cigarette boxes, reminiscent of the fact that the two occupants of the room had just dined and that very comfortably. You would have said that the room was a bachelor's room at a glance. A man's idea of comfort is different to a woman's. There is something more solid and restful about it, and it is this feeling which makes a woman, when she invades a man's rooms, want "to brighten things up a little." For the moment, though, no feminine touch had been brought into Leslie Martyn's rooms. Their sombreness suited his silently imaginative temperament; but the feminine note was provided by Mrs. Jack Colson herself, who sat staring into the fire the while Martyn walked up and down restlessly, smoking cigarettes and only stopping at intervals to finger some piece of old silver on the sideboard, or aimlessly to adjust an ornament.

A handsome man in his way was Leslie Martyn. Not young—thirty-five, perhaps, and of the Celtic type, dark-haired, fine-featured, and with that touch of suggested passion which had caused many women to think that they would like him to make love to them and yet be faintly relieved that he had not done so. There was the Celtic sincerity about him as well as the Celtic charm. To be with him was to be carried away by his unconscious acting, so

sincere did he seem. Once away, though, and doubts crept in. For himself, though he had amused himself with many women, no one of them had taken hold of him like Letty Colson, the wife of his life-long friend Jack Colson.

Colson was away in Switzerland at the present time. He was one of those men who chafe perpetually unless they can have periodic times of muscular exertion. Violent exercise was essential to him. At the moment he was climbing and pitting his well-trained muscles and level head against all the obstacles that snow and ice, combined with dizzy heights, could place in his way. You had only to look at Letty Colson, though, to see that such fierce delights were not in her line. She was of the frail and fragile type, a bundle of nerves, all sensitiveness and emotion. There was a time when she had worshipped Colson for his strength, and felt him restful. Then she had come to weary a little of his almost brutal breeziness. He had an immense admiration for her as something delicate and beautiful, but a little beyond him, for in his heart of hearts, deeply though he loved her, he had no great understanding of moods and fancies which could not be dissipated by a cold plunge or a gallop. Letty had never known she was unhappy until Martyn made her feel it. Then in certain of her husband's absences it had come to be an accepted fact that he should entertain her. They were both passionate music lovers, and there is no greater power than music for developing a feeling of unrest between two people who should not fall in love with each

other, but are doing so rapidly. They read together; they found they had similar tastes in art and literature, and in this last month during which Colson had been away, to stretch himself as he called it, matters had come to a crisis. Martyn had shown his hand openly. He had told Letty Colson his love, and she had listened. Surely this devoted attendant must care for her more than a man who was always leaving her to go mountain climbing or exerting himself in some ridiculous way, she argued to herself, and now on this evening, which was likely to be one of the last meetings before Colson returned, she had dined with him alone at his rooms, and he had passionately pleaded with her to throw up everything and come to him. She knew she would do it, but she still hesitated to say the final word.

Martyn suddenly threw away his cigarette and crossed to the woman, who had not moved.

"It seems a little absurd to talk about honour here, and now that things have gone so far, but I can't face Jack any more. It's got to be one thing or the other. It must. Either we part to-night when I take you home, or we start a new life. We've neither of us anything to wait for. We can go away when and where you like, and I'll make up to you for everything. What's it to be, dear? I want you, and he—well, I won't talk about him except to say that he has never loved you as I will. He pulled her up from the chair and took her in his arms, she only half reluctant. "I love you; I love you. Do you hear that? I used to think no man could say 'I love you' without feeling a fool, but I understand now. It's the only thing one can say. They're the only words that mean anything really—I love you." She lifted up her face, and he kissed her. "That means yes?"

"Yes, Leslie," she whispered, "I'll come. It won't break his heart, will it?"

"Not while there's a mountain to climb or a lion to shoot"; and he smiled at his easy victory. "You look so splen-

did to-night in that red dress. In the theater a red dress always seems to suggest a wicked woman—an adventurer—but not you—"

"Well, what am I, after all? Not the last, but perhaps the first."

"You're just the sweetest and dearest woman in the world. You've been neglected and unhappy, but that's not being wicked, and now you're never going to be neglected or unhappy any more."

Then they fell to making plans. They would start the next morning. There was no occasion for urgent haste, as Colson could not possibly be back for two or three days.

"We'll go down to the South of France first. How would you like that?"

"It would be delightful, and you won't ever let me think I've done wrong in coming to you? You won't ever let me regret?"

"Never," and he kissed her willing lips passionately. For the moment at any rate he was carried away by his emotion and his desire for this woman. Other loves in his past life had been fancies, but now he was certain he had met his ideal. She was of the clinging, sensitive type and gave him a feeling of strength which with some other women he felt that he lacked.

They sat down by the fire, hand in hand, like a couple of children.

"I almost wish that we could stay here. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just have this little corner of the world to ourselves—shut ourselves in and not be interfered with by anybody?"

Martyn laughed. "You'd soon get tired of that, and tired of me. Besides, you're too beautiful to be hushed up in a corner. I shall want the world to see you. I shall be very proud of my wife."

"Your wife! It sounds so strange," and she nestled up to him on the big sofa. "It quite startled me!"

"You'll soon get used to it, and of course that's what you will be. Colson won't stand in the way of your happiness. He'll do the square thing."

"The curious thing is," and her face took on a puzzled, anxious look, "though I've been married to Jack for five years I could never be sure what he would do. He's one of those people who might behave quite differently at a crisis to how you had expected. There's a something in him that I never know. He never talks, but really I believe he's a poet. Anyway, he's got tremendously strong ideas and feelings. He hates to show them, though. I think that's it," she added wistfully.

"Well, if you don't mind," said Martyn, "we'll leave off discussing him and his merits. Why, you're shivering!"

"Am I? I feel cold."

Martyn got up and stirred the fire. A half burnt log burst out into flickering blue flames.

"It doesn't seem right," said Letty, gazing dreamily at the fire, "for flame to be blue. It's so weird. It makes me think of escaping souls."

"You're getting morbid. Why should carbon monoxide make you think of escaping souls?"

"I don't know, but I'm nervous to-night. I feel as though something were happening. I ought to go home now, but I'm afraid. I don't want to be alone."

"It's only for one more day, and then you shall never be alone any more. You're all nerves through being left alone so much by that brute. Something happening! What could be happening?"

"That's just it. I know it's silly of me." She got up, moved to the fire, and then with a sudden sense of dizziness swayed, put out her hand to save herself, and dislodged a little Italian mirror which stood on the mantelpiece. It crashed down into the fireplace, where it lay shattered. "Oh, what have I done!"

"You've broken a little Renaissance mirror, that's all." He smiled ruefully.

"Yes, but a mirror!"

"Well?"

"It's so unlucky."

"Nonsense. It's a pity, but it doesn't matter."

"I wouldn't have done it for anything. It means misfortune—and to-night of all nights! Oh, Leslie, I'm going to bring you misfortune."

"My dear child"—he kicked the pieces of glass almost savagely under the grate—"you're overwrought and excited. The sooner I get you away the better. Now, look here, we catch the boat train to-morrow. I'll be at the station waiting for you, and then off we start on the new life, and you'll forget all about these fancies. Now, you understand exactly, don't you?" and he took her hands.

"Yes," but she still stared at the broken mirror as though fascinated.

"You won't fail me? You'll be there?"

"Yes, I'll be there."

"Good. Now no more nonsense. Why, you're still trembling!"

"I can't help it."

"I'm going to give you something to warm you up." He turned to the table and the spirit stand, and was pouring out some brandy when a knock came at the door, and Silver, Martyn's valet, came in with a telegram on a salver.

"This has just come, sir."

"All right; put it down."

The man laid the brick-coloured envelope on the mahogany, where it seemed to strike a note of foreboding.

"Will you be wanting anything more this evening, sir?"

"No; you can go."

"Thank you, sir. Good night." Silver went out, closing the door softly.

"He doesn't sleep on the place," said Martyn, coming over to Letty with the glass. "I don't like anyone here at night. Now, drink this."

She just put the glass to her lips, and then stood it on the mantelpiece. "I can't. What's that telegram?"

"Nothing important—at least, nothing important enough to stand in our way; of that I'm very sure." He picked up the wire.

"It might be. Do read it. I'm frightened. I don't like telegrams."

"I don't know what's the matter with you to-night, but I'll soon set your mind

at rest." He tore open the envelope, scanned the message, and then, in spite of himself, a look of horror came over his face. It came and went as the full significance of the message dawned upon him, and then he stood for an instant trying to figure out the momentous change in their relations which the message brought about. After all, was it so great a disaster? He folded up the paper thoughtfully.

"Leslie, what is it?" She came to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

"I'm wondering whether to tell you—now."

"You must! Is it anything that could come between us?"

"No! No!"

"Then I don't think I want to know. We can go to-morrow just the same?"

"We *can* go"—he frowned thoughtfully—"but it won't be just the same. Letty, I've got to tell you. I don't think we shall go to-morrow. This news makes all the difference to you and to me. It's something you've got to know. It's something terrible, but you mustn't give way. It's a wire from Dunning. You know Peter Dunning?"

"Yes; he's away with Jack."

"Then listen: Colson killed yesterday while crossing a crevasse. Fear impossible to recover body. Break news to Letty before she sees papers. Dunning." There was a terrible, strained silence, then Martyn added cynically, "He's sent the news to me as his best friend and yours."

Deadly white but with a tearless face, Letty sank into a chair, covering her face with her hands. "Oh, it's awful! Isn't it awful!"

Martyn, with unsteady hand, mixed himself a stiff whiskey and soda. "Poor old Jack!" he muttered. Then pulling himself together, he went over to the shuddering Letty. "Yes, it is awful, but we've got to face the situation. Don't give way. We must talk it over quietly."

"To die like that with no one near him! I can't bear to think of it. If only I could have said good-bye to him!

I wonder whether he was thinking of me."

In spite of himself Martyn smiled a grim smile. "You weren't contemplating saying good-bye to him."

"No, but it seems different now. He was very fond of me once, and now I shall never see him again. I can't realize it."

Martyn checked a renewed desire to smile at this illogical attitude on the part of a woman who had been on the point of leaving her husband for a lover. "He's dead," he said firmly and almost brutally. "Nothing can alter that—no tears, regrets, or wishes that things had been different. What we have to consider is not what might have been, but what we are going to do."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you see? There need be no running away now. You are a widow, and are free to marry any time. Everything can be straight and aboveboard. You must go home, and after a decent period of mourning we will be quietly married, and go away as we had arranged, but there need be no surreptitious romance. It sounds a cruel thing to say, but in a way his death has simplified everything enormously."

Letty lifted up a white face. "Yes, and yet somehow I feel that if we don't go away to-morrow we never shall. You and I will never come together in the ordinary way like other people."

"Nonsense," and laughingly he bent to kiss her.

"Don't," she said—"not yet," and drew away.

"Oh, very well." A little piqued, Martyn turned to the table and took another drink.

"You don't think that he knew or guessed about us, and committed suicide?"

"No. He was the last man in the world to do such a thing."

"I wonder if we either of us quite knew what was the last thing he would do."

There was a heavy silence after this, broken only by the sound of a clock ticking. The woman stared in front

of her with white and drawn face. The man watched her anxiously and nervously. Colson's death had come between them, however much it might have cleared the outlook, and lay like a shadow over their future.

"I ought to be going," said Letty, at last, and then repeated, "but I'm afraid."

"There's no hurry."

"I can't realize it. Jack is dead! Oh, I knew something had happened!"

Somewhere outside a dog howled, and both shuddered involuntarily. It was a quiet spot where Martyn lived, but in the strained silence which had descended on the scene you could faintly hear the murmur of London, while in the distance it seemed that trains hooted and called to one another like owls or strange midnight birds.

At last, unable to endure inaction, Martyn got up and began softly pacing the room. Then crossing to the window, he caught his foot in a trailing electric wire and brought the lamp on the table to the ground with a crash.

"Oh!" Letty started up with almost a shriek.

"Confound the thing!" Ruefully he swept aside the fragments. "It's nothing. Don't be frightened." But the additional gloom,—for the lamp had exploded like a pistol shot,—made the room seem even more eerie. "We seem to be in for a chapter of accidents tonight," and he tried to laugh. "You've broken a mirror, and now I've smashed the lamp. We're quits." He came and sat beside her, but once more she shrank away and again there followed a long and painful pause.

"Whose portrait is that over there, Leslie?" She stared at a dingy painting on the wall. "Have you ever noticed how curiously it looks at you?"

"It's only just an old painting."

"But who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Where did it come from?"

"Why—" suddenly remembering, he pulled himself up and hesitated.

"Where *did* it come from? There's something so strange about it—so

threatening. Tell me," and she gripped his hand feverishly.

"Jack gave it me years ago when I first came here. I'd never thought about it until you mentioned it." He moved restlessly, and in the half light it did seem as though the eyes in the picture were dominating them with a steady gaze. "It shall come down tomorrow if it worries you," he added, unwilling to admit that he was equally disturbed himself.

There was no waiting until tomorrow, though, for just then, by one of those curious coincidences, the cord on which it had hung for many years parted, and it came crashing down on to a cabinet, bringing with it in its fall a beautiful little Tanagra figure which was one of Martyn's cherished possessions.

Letty sprang up in terror, and the man, now almost equally disturbed, held her almost fainting in his arms and comforted her: "You're unstrung and imaginative. This news has upset you, but it's no good giving way," and he forced her down into a big chair, before picking up the fallen painting and gazing at the fallen statue. "My poor little Venus has lost her beauty, I'm afraid. There, look, I ought to have all these pictures re-hung. The cord has simply rotted through. It was bound to come down sooner or later, and it's chosen that it should be sooner." He placed the picture with its face to the wall, and tried to pass the matter off lightly, but his hand shook in spite of himself as he took another cigarette and lighted it. "Now I'm going to get your cloak and see you home."

"Yes, I must go." She clung to him convulsively.

"It's in the other room. Shall I go, or will you?"

"You go." She stood as though afraid to move, and Martyn, gently disengaging her hands, disappeared into the adjoining bedroom. The little blue flames still danced upwards from the old ship logs in the grate, while a movement in the other room made her start

nervously and glance round; but she was standing in the same place when Martyn reappeared with the cloak. Then she knelt by the fire and held out her hands to the blaze.

"By Jove! It's twelve o'clock! You must come."

"Look," she said, pointing to the flames. "What did I say they looked like? Poor Jack!"

"My dear!" He gently raised her up. "We shall both be driveling lunatics if we give way to fancies like this," and he held the cloak.

"He chose this cloak himself. He was so pleased when I liked it—and now he's dead!"

"The next one I'll choose."

"The next. Oh, yes, the next—What was that!" and she started nervously once more. It was an old panelled room that they were in, and at that moment the dry wood chose to crack ominously. Only those who have once felt the silence in a room at night know the multitude of strange sounds which come—sounds which you have never noticed before—sounds which perhaps at any other time you would have missed if they had not recurred. You have but to get yourself into an overworked imaginative state, and a quiet room may produce the same effect on your nerves as a lonely wood at night.

"I'm going to get you another brandy," he said.

"No. No. I don't want it. Leslie," and she turned to him with a white, horror-stricken face, "did he ever come to these rooms?"

"No, not here. He used to come to the old place."

"Then he's coming now. He knows, and he's coming."

"You're mad," said Martyn hoarsely, but now the man was thoroughly infected with her fear, for there was abject terror written on every line of her face.

"Listen!" She clung to him convulsively.

Both stood listening in strained attention.

"It's nothing."

"It is. It is. He's a long way off yet, but he's coming. I can hear him. Oh, what shall I do!"

In the tense silence then it seemed to both that they could hear slow steps approaching.

"It's in the street—a policeman."

"No, no; he's coming. He's found out. He knows now and he's coming."

Slowly the steps mounted the stairs, as though someone was drawing near slowly, painfully and reluctantly. Neither ever forgot the awful suspense of that moment, for Martyn now made no pretence of concealing his agitation. The steps halted outside the door, and then there was a long pause, broken at last by a quiet tapping.

Altogether past words now, Letty only moaned, "Oh! Oh! Oh!" while Martyn, the perspiration standing out on his forehead, stared at the door, fascinated with horror.

The quiet tapping came again.

"Don't open it! Oh, don't open it!"

Not for a fortune would Martyn have done so, but even as he gazed the door began very slowly to swing on its hinges until it stood far enough open for anyone outside to see clearly into the room, and there remained steady, as though an invisible hand were holding the door handle. An electric light in an Oriental lamp shed a dim radiance outside, but beyond there was nothing to be seen. The horror of the situation, though, the sense of being watched and reproached by an intangible, invisible something, by this time was too much for Letty, and she fainted under the strain of emotion, while Martyn was so overwrought that for the moment he hardly realized that he was holding an inanimate body in his arms. Then gently he let the slight figure slide on to the sofa, and in that moment Leslie Martyn knew and registered a vow that come what might he would never take Letty Colson to wife. Quietly and slowly, after a long, spell-bound pause, the door closed once more, as though an invisible visitor had merely looked in to assure himself of a fact, and Martyn, feeling the horror and

strain of the situation in some slight measure lightened, tried to lose himself in endeavoring to revive the woman on the sofa.

When she did come round it was only to a half realization of what had happened. All the tragic terror had gone from her eyes, but in her manner there was a chilly aloofness which gave her the air of being occupied with some other world than this. Very clearly Martyn saw that it was the same with her as with him. Not only had all the passion gone out of their romance, but the romance itself was dead. The dead man had intervened in some mysterious way, and cut in death a tie which he could not or would not touch while he lived.

"I fainted, didn't I, when you showed me that telegram about Jack?" she said faintly.

"Yes."

"I'm better now. I'm going home." She pulled her cloak round her. "Don't think me disagreeable, but I'd rather you didn't come with me. I want to be alone. Just put me in a cab, will you?"

"As you wish."

There was a formal restraint between them, in marked contrast to the earlier part of the evening. Nothing was fur-

ther from either than the idea of a kiss or an embrace.

And with this change had come an absence of all fear. The strange opening of the door Martyn was now telling himself could only have been an hallucination. Else how was it that he could now approach it without any feeling, when ten minutes he had stood rooted with horror at its movement?

Letty hesitated a moment, looking round the room as though to fix in her mind the events of the night.

"Come. I'll get you a cab."

"Yes, I'm coming, and Leslie—you know this is Good-bye."

He did not attempt to contest with her. "Yes."

"It's so strange. Now, when we could be married, it's impossible. You feel that, don't you? You must."

"Yes, you're quite right." He held the door open, and they passed out together.

The last thing Letty Colson said as Martyn put her into a cab and shook hands with her always remained in his memory.

"You know," she said, with a quiet smile—and he could not understand why she smiled—"I'm beginning to understand Jack, and I like him so much better than I did."



MY NEIGHBOR

By W. F. Jenkins

THERE is a lock of hair six inches long that only partly covers his bald spot and really accentuates the nudity of his head; there is a protuberance before him which is neither useful nor æsthetic; his hands are pudgy and soft and his fingers are stubby and short, with stumpy and unbeautiful nails. There are short, bristly hairs that grow on the end of his nose, the pores of which are large and distinctly visible. He dyes his moustache unskilfully and is kittenish.

And he believes that he was created in the image of his Maker!

PAPILLONS D'ENNUI

By Seumas Le Chat

THE moon looks down on the city like the weary soul of a woman who dances. Beneath, like gems dreaming of life, the lights flutter and glow—orange and emerald, purple and rose. Flung in their midst as a green leaf in a jewel-casket is a garden where a girl droops and curls like a smoke-ring in the corner of a great marble seat piled with cushions. She is a girl like a poem by Verlaine, or like one of those delicate hothouse flowers which seem weighed down by their own faint, mystic perfume. A lassitude of moonlight slips from one bare shoulder, the other is still drowned in the scarlet silken billows of her cloak, which drifts idly downward bearing her hands like white poppy flowers on its drowsy waves. Her eyes are two weary sapphires glimpsed through lashes curled up in disdainful boredom. Little sighs crouch in the dimple of a broken smile and tired young kisses rest on the adorable droop of her lips as though to shelter from the storm of life.

A man enters the garden and looks down at her as she seems to float elusively round her fiery cigarette tip.

"Why are you bored?" he asks, watching a sleepy curl lean itself in a retroussé attitude against her cheek.

Her voice uncurls itself from her throat like a fairy who has been sleeping in the heart of a flower:

"Because I am a good listener," she drawls, "and it is impossible to listen and remain fashionable unless one adopts a mannerism. Unrelieved taciturnity develops into dowdiness in a week, but silence individualized by a mannerism may be as chic as a dream of Paquin. Fashion does not allow a

woman to be a beautifully gowned priestess in a trance. A fit of abstraction will ruin the fit of any other garment one may put on. If one listens one must be a cloud, not a cushion. Therefore I am bored and so escape placidity. I wear silence as lightly as cigarette-smoke and with as much 'chien' as a Parisienne in an intentionally rakish little hat."

"Then your boredom is only an affectation!" cries the man, and at the words a storm of flame seems to burst over him, and in a moment he has flung his heart down where her two little scarlet-shod feet perch like sleepy birds on their high heels.

Words that are veiled kisses jostle from his lips and looks that are but masked caresses spring from his eyes.

His fiery love-words fall into the deep pool of the night and it ripples into a dark opal of silence, across which the girl's voice strikes presently like a slow silver crack in the shifting colours.

"Affections are the only realities," she says, mingling a yawn and a smile like rose velvet and ivory.

"Love is dead—bored stiff!" and with a laugh like the sound of a pilgrim wavelet stretching itself softly on the sun-gilt sand, she points to where a marble Eros stands facing her, transfixed by a silver spear of moonlight; his childish mouth frozen in a pout of disappointment; his plump hands, tight-clenched as rosebuds, holding the futile bow and the unsped arrow which points at her heart.

And all around like moths dreaming of life the lights of the city flutter and glow—orange and emerald, purple and rose.

THE SIMPLETON

By Evelyn Campbell

WHEN the moment arrived that she could bear it no longer, she made a tremulous effort and slipped from the bed. In the movement there was all the nerve-racking concentration of an adventure into unknown daring. It was incredible that she should be stealing away from him, like a stealthy thing of the night, when for so many years she had lain in simple peace by his side. But it was not that thought alone which bent her knees and sent her hand tight across her lips lest some quivering sigh force words between them,—it was because she knew that he lay there awake as he had been for hours, and was conscious of her lightest movement, yet uttered no word of protest or expostulation.

In her bare feet she stood for a moment shivering beside the bed. Her heart longed for some familiar, homely challenge which her subconscious self warned would not come; then she began a slow and silent progress towards the door. The absurdity of it all was lost in the tragic undercurrent which one word from either would have brought into active being.

Reaching the door, she drew it gently open and passed into the wide, dark hall, obscure in the dignified silence and rest of this honorable and peaceful home. She felt the exhaustion of a soul which has passed through a trying ordeal, where each step threatened the edifice of her whole life. Yet it was inevitable that she must come away and leave him solitary in the room that they had shared for twenty years.

Searching with trembling fingers in the dark, she found the switch inside the door of the spare room, and a single

bulb flashed into life from the entire chandelier. The room was seldom used and some of the lights had been removed; now in the inadequate glow the interior loomed, strange and unreal, as do even the most familiar surroundings at an uncanny hour.

With the woman's instinct she crept to the mirror and peered at her own reflection, as though seeking some childish comfort in the companionship of her own image, but she was not reassured by the sight of her vague figure, larger than ever in her voluminous nightgown, or her white face, quivering with strangled tears, grotesquely appealing in its middleaged sorrow, and framed in a foolish boudoir cap which she wore to conceal kid curlers. Against the background of the dimly lit room she beheld nothing to give her doubts relief, nothing to send her back with calmed fears to her husband's side in that deserted room where he lay in sinister wakefulness.

Bewildered, she questioned her own eyes that looked back at her from the shimmering expanse of bevelled glass. What did it all mean? What had she done, wherein failed at last, after the placid years that stretched behind them like a smooth white road. At the beginning she had attributed it as women have the custom of attributing anything incomprehensible in their husbands, to some business annoyance. That any other reason could keep him awake for hours in the dead time of the night, was unbelievable. He had never discussed business with her; it was impossible for her to understand anything more complicated than her domestic accounts and even these had become a

time honored jest between them, when he was obliged to reduce them to order at intervals; she had never dreamed of questioning him, not even when it gradually filtered through her mind that money, or loans or franchises had nothing to do with this. The reason lurked behind a closed door between the two before which she paused appalled.

With simple guile she had tried to wean him from these secret thoughts that instinct warned were her enemy, by all the allurements of his favorite meals, her prettiest clothes and his tiresome friends asked in to play auction which she disliked with an intensity born of bewilderment, but it was all in vain. He accepted everything with the tranquillity of habit and in the end things remained as they had been, except in one degree. Where she had been mildly curious and concerned, she was now oppressed with an unnamable fear that first had banished sleep and at last had forced her to this incredible solitude.

Face to face with herself in the night, she demanded some solution of the problem that by day grew remote enough to be evaded. Silent tears drenched her fair smooth cheeks when she recalled the shadowless past, so eventless and so sure. He had loved her so much, had been so unfailingly good and true; they had been all in all to each other, and in her eyes he was still the young lover who had won her girl's heart.

Suddenly terrified, she looked at herself with new eyes. Though he had not changed for her, could it be that she had lost her charm for him? She saw herself, middle aged, her youth lost in flesh, a woman going down the hill. The night gown she wore was beautifully hand embroidered; she had boasted to him that it would have cost ten dollars in the shops and she had made it for a fifth of that sum, but she wore glasses when she sewed and for a long time she had gone about the house in wide "comfort" shoes, disguising the little feet he had once treasured.

She was leaving him behind at the top of the hill!

She crept between the cold linen sheets of the bed and lay there facing a darkness that had become illumined. At once she understood with all the clarity of vision that is given to women when their hearts and affections are concerned; perhaps at that moment she understood better than her husband himself.

A sound at the side of the bed startled her and she put out her hand and touched the cold nose of old Maud, the antiquated poodle who had risen rheumatically from her cushion in the other bedroom and followed her mistress on this nocturnal ramble. She lifted the dog and it curled up against her side contented. She felt comforted. Then she asked herself why some things never changed, no matter what the years brought—dogs, old servants, children. She began to cry again, but this time quietly and peacefully as though such tears were old familiar friends. They had never had any children.

Morning, with all its poetry is the most commonplace thing in the world. Before its uncompromising clarity tragedy becomes farce, midnight bugbears ordinary routine, even the rhapsodies of lovers become a demand for breakfast and the newspapers. The morning face of the world wears the schoolmaster's expression of duties to be performed, and those who have played wastrel with the night's soft hours must pay the penalty. It is the leveller of air castles and the panacea of exaggerated emotions.

The Renfrews, breakfasting late, were able to ignore their unspoken differences through the sheer hurry of daily events, behind their schedule for half an hour. His goodbye kiss was the non-committal caress that means less than nothing, and her mute acceptance bore no hint of the pained wonder of her heart. She stood by the window and watched his tall upstanding figure pass down the veranda steps, dumb before the unforeseen element that had invaded her tranquillity.

The Renfrews lived in the finest

house in Springfield, just as naturally as they were the richest and most important people in the town. The First National Bank had long since submerged its identity in the familiar title of "Renfrew's Bank" and it bore the same relation to strength and security in the eyes of its clients as might the United States Mint. It had always belonged to the Renfrews and they had always been rich, just as they had always been honest and happy.

Gordon Renfrew was an envied man as he walked briskly down town, disdaining democratically the motor cars of his friends, who paused invitingly as they passed him. He always walked morning and evening and that may have helped him to look thirty-eight when he was forty-five, and it may have been one of the reasons for his popularity among the element who knew not motor cars and walked to save a nickel; for he was often companioned by some humble clerk or workingman in whose affairs he took the most genuine and kindly interest. He was always ready to extend a worried man's note, to give advice on the investment of anybody's little savings, to distribute sympathy and goodwill and fellowship wherever it would do the most good. In the town his fathers had helped to build, he was the pillar of finance, of church and charity, which are often three vastly different things. Yes, indeed, Gordon Renfrew could have been Mayor or President for the asking, had Springfield the say, and best of all his popularity was entirely deserved as his actions were entirely sincere.

Yet this was the man who had grown almost to hate his wife after twenty years of love and contentment, and who was planning with every waking thought to be with another woman who was separated from him by all the barriers of convention, marriage and social position.

Behind his habitual mask of benign gravity he reviewed his emotions as he walked through the accustomed streets. Lila's action last night in leaving their room had had its significance, although

his mind easily plumbed the shallows of hers and he knew that she was far from suspecting the truth. In that case there would undoubtedly have been tears and reproaches without number; with man's sophistry he was sure that no woman could be silent in the presence of a rival. Lila was merely conscious, in her childish fashion of the mental discord between them, and had been impelled by some feminine reasoning to show her resentment by leaving him. Ignoring his intimate knowledge of her gentle nature he imagined her sulking in some distant room and had revelled in the luxurious freedom from her presence which had become so unbearable to his self-tortured nerves. Before the eyes of the June morning he was slightly ashamed of these thoughts, but he stubbornly resisted any feeling of tenderness for his wife. She had unpardonably allowed him to fall out of love with her, and he was not enjoying the tumult and upheaval of emotion that resulted.

By making a slight detour he was able to pass in sight of her house, and was rewarded by a glint of pink behind the green trellis. He walked on townwards, bathed in that half guilty glow of pleasurable excitement which encompasses a middle-aged man in a clandestine flirtation. He felt a delightful sense of freedom and his footsteps resounded like a boy's; then his mind diverted again to Lila. If women would only be sensible. If she could be made to realize without a scene that they would both be happier without the eternal closeness of their wearisome intimacy, in short, if she would leave him alone, let him slip easily into this belated glow of youthfulness that filled his veins with ardor for the fresh and untried! But like other men, he told himself that he knew women. She would not do without explanations, and when the time arrived, how could he explain.

At four o'clock in the afternoon he began to be restive. A substantial farmer immersed in a wheat calculation claimed his erratic attention, but finally

he was rid of him, and before Harlow the cashier, who had been hovering around like an uneasy insect, could seize upon him, he escaped by means of the side door.

He was almost certain where he would meet her; that had been settled between them long ago. She was so bright and clever that a mere hint was sufficient and she understood. Sure enough, there she was, lingering in front of Gentry and Co.'s big windows.

It was very clever of them to choose such a spot, at once so public and natural a place to linger, for it is easy to be unobserved in a crowd.

Five years ago she had been a part of Gentry and Co. herself and had personally displayed all the latest ideas in combs, jewelry novelties and belts, behind the fancy goods counter. Mr. Pauls, the buyer, still claimed that he had never had such a model or such a saleswoman.

She often mourned gently over those days. She had been a popular girl with the travelling salesmen and had not depended at all upon the doubtful gallantry of Springfield youth; but also, a specious, over-ambitious window dresser with a plausible argument that in time he was sure to be taken into the firm, overcame her caution and beguiled her into marriage, since when her life had been a buried one.

She told the pathetic little tale to Mr. Renfrew, who knew everyone and was so kind that he even chatted with the newsboys. Her husband expected her to stay at home and keep everything going on twenty per. She had no friends. She *would not*, after her years of close contact with Springfield's elect across the fancy goods counter, condescend to the cooking, stewing wives of working men where the weekly twenty relegated her, and of course, *of course* it was out of the question for her to know the people she would have liked and enjoyed. Even Mrs. Renfrew, on whom she had waited and chatted with, scores of times, forgot to speak when they met on Main street.

Mr. Renfrew felt badly about this.

His wife was the kindest soul in the world, and if it would do any good, he would ask her to call. But this suggestion was received with sad abnegation.

"Oh, no," protested Mamie Keith, who was prettier now than she ever was, "I would not have anyone *asked* to call on me."

So there was nothing for it but that she must endure life without the solace of friends, except in such instances as stray little chats with an occasional person who understood, and even in that she must be more than discreet, as people were quick to censure.

That was how it began and how it continued with increasing momentum, until Gordon Renfrew and perhaps Mamie Keith already looked forward to an ending which would shake Springfield out of its half-century's sleep.

She was always prettily surprised to see him and properly flattered when he spoke to her, and though she was obliged to live upon the paltry sum of twenty a week, it had not affected her supply of trinkets, for she dangled some very fetching bits of cut jet at the banker when she returned his salutation. He admired her with all the intensity of a man whose attention has been faithful to one woman for too long a period. He could detect no tawdriness beneath her glitter and no shallows behind her languishing brown eyes. She was so young, so vital that the last vestige of hesitation was swept from his soul by the power of his quickening blood, the languorous summer evening and her slender, warm proximity. At the moment, he felt that all his wealth and high standing among men, even his honor, would not be too great a price to pay for this young thing who gave him youth again.

Their meetings had been left half to chance before this, but that was not enough for him now. Before they parted she had promised with charming reluctance to meet him that evening—it was her husband's lodge night, and there would be time for a little drive along the Pike. But he must not think that she had the habit of doing such

wild unlawful things—it was only because she felt so safe with him!

He went home with his head in the stars, and his wife met him with the trouble of their unspoken difference clouding her eyes, faded from a day's secret weeping, but he had no thought for her problem, though from mere habit he was as gently considerate as ever. For a while she thought that he had noticed her new blue foulard but she soon saw that the usual mood of detachment was upon him, and having a simple pride she withdrew into her own thoughts.

It was half-past eight when he strolled out to the wide, low stable that conformed to a motor car but sheltered a trotting horse or two, for Springfield, once famous for its roadsters, was slow to yield old gods for new, and the people still cheerfully paid a tax that kept up an immaculate Speedway where no venturesome automobile had ever sounded its horn. Renfrew was one of the citizens who kept horses for pleasure and cars for work, and he saw the negro stableman lead out and harness his favorite with a genuine glow of pleasure.

The night was dark and starless and he met no one who was recognizable as he drove slowly to the rendezvous, a shadowy street corner not far from her home. He had feared to be early and so he was, for there was no one waiting when he reached the spot.

He had no plans for the interview that he had begged for, yet he knew that before they parted there would be an understanding which would place them upon another footing, and afterwards—his mind grew dizzy at the thought. He had money, he was still a young man if he had her youth to buoy him, and there was the wide world. He loved her, and gasped at the thought.

Presently he looked at his watch and found to his dismay that it was long after nine. Perhaps she had misunderstood and was waiting at another corner. He drove slowly around the block but there was no one in the shadow of the big elm trees that brooded over the

lonely street. Then he passed her house but it was dark and silent, and his impatience gave place to disappointment that something had occurred to prevent her from keeping the appointment.

He drew his hat down to shield his face and huddled into a slouching attitude. Neighbors were grouped upon their verandas and belated children frolicked beneath the corner arclights. Someone might recognize him at any moment.

He became conscious of a strange feeling which at last he realized was shame. He, Gordon Renfrew, was ashamed. He, who had never lowered his eyes before any man, was lurking here in the shadow, trembling lest some passing child should call his name.

Forgetting the woman in the sting of this thought, he struck the horse a sharp blow that sent it at full speed upon the avenue that led to the broad open Pike. For the first time since the madness had seized upon him he tried to think coolly and dispassionately of this new phase of life. His passion was not checked, but he was angered that it must be clandestine. He wished to feel justified in a thing that nothing could ever justify, and he rebelled fiercely at the inescapable laws that bounded his actions.

He argued with himself that there was no wrong between him and the woman; as yet they had not even spoken of love. If the way could be cleared they might even marry some day. He went over all the timeworn philosophies of why four people should be miserable when two of them at least could be happy and he arranged the affairs of everybody concerned in the neat check-board fashion that promises better than it performs.

He thought of Lila and their twenty years together as a huge mistake. She was not the woman for him and had never been; she was too yielding and too gentle. What he needed was sparkle, vitality, but he was resolved that Lila should never want for anything. She, of course, would never

consent to leave Springfield but there was money enough for both, and there would be a broader life for him.

Already the swift mare had carried the light runabout far out upon the Pike. Suddenly she slowed down, and quivering lightly as at the instinct of some unseen menace, showed a tendency to turn about. He tried to urge her forward, but Violette, true to her name, still shrank away; then he saw that they were at a point much further than he had supposed and decided to yield to her fancy.

At this place the road formed an elbow, a sharp curve, densely wooded on either side where many an upset had occurred, and Violette had perhaps conceived the fancy that she might encounter a rival runabout or a black bear around the corner. Smiling indulgently he allowed her to turn back to the town.

So far they had had the Pike to themselves, but before they had gone many paces the sharp trot of an approaching horse mingled with Violette's trim clatter.

In a moment a buggy passed, well on the other side of the road, and in another Violette was off at a mad gallop, for almost behind her there had sounded the loud hoarse report of a gun.

Renfrew had difficulty in controlling the frightened mare. He heard the other horse running wildly until the turn in the road shut away the sound. Violette still galloping, met another vehicle and before they reached town, still another and once he thought he heard another gunshot, but he was far too annoyed at the nervousness of the horse to give a thought to the improbability of hunters choosing that place and hour for sport.

His annoyance increased when he reached the stable and found the hostler missing and was obliged to put up the horse himself. Afterwards he let himself into the house and went up to his room, meeting no one.

Lila was not there. Her silver toilet things were gone from the dresser and

all about the room were only his belongings. So, she was wise enough to accept the situation without wearying explanations. He felt almost a glow of gratitude towards her. Who would have expected so calm and sensible an attitude from Lila? He got into his pajamas and threw himself across the bed with a rush of contentment. Alone, he was alone, and he could sleep.

Someone was tapping insistently upon his door. He sprung up amazed to find the broad sun beating into the window. It was late, long past his hour of rising. He opened the door and found Beulah there, chattering with excitement and forcing into his hands a newspaper, damp from the press and rioting in gigantic headlines. True Springfieldian that Beulah was, she explained as well as she could that something dreadful had happened and that she thought Mr. Renfrew ought to know.

He took the paper and went back into the room, closing the door upon her. The Daily News told it all in a few sentences plentifully interlarded with "terrible," "tragedy," "assassin," and such expressive expletives.

Between ten and eleven the night before, three driving parties on the Speedway had been fired upon, at intervals, by an unknown person. The first vehicle, containing a negro man and wife, had received a volley of shot, most of which had landed in the man's face, killing him instantly. The woman had managed to drive the horse to the nearest shelter, a roadhouse a mile further on, where a few seconds later a second buggy whose inmates had escaped with a light peppering of duck shot, arrived. While the bewildered inmates of the house were planning an investigation, the grewsome finale of the night occurred. A third horse galloped driverless into the stable yard and in the bottom of the runabout that reeled behind him, they found the body of a beautiful young woman whose fair breast had received a double charge from the mysterious gun. A dozen persons identified her at the first glance as Mrs. Mamie

Keith, whose husband was an employee of Gentry and Co.

Then followed an appalling tangle of questions and surmise. Who had done the shooting and what was the object? Who was the woman's companion and what had become of him? A knowing reporter summed it up as a case of jealousy. The young woman had many admirers; everyone came forward at once to testify to that; she loved gayety and admiration. She was a coquette and someone had loved her enough to risk killing a half-dozen people to be sure of killing her. She had betrayed some desperate soul into such a crime that credulity paused before it aghast. The night was so dark that the murderer, concealed in the trees along the roadside, had been unable to distinguish faces and had shot indiscriminately at everyone who passed.

The reporter was generous with his clues. He told about a telephone operator who had listened in, and knew all about Mrs. Keith's engagements. He exonerated the husband who was solemnly at his lodge until twelve, but he was prodigal with hints to prominent citizens who would have to explain their whereabouts during those mysterious hours—

When he had read thus far the paper dropped from his nerveless hand. Dead! She was dead! Strange that he felt nothing but this dumb wonder. He must have passed her on the road, and one word from him would have stopped and saved her. Why, he was there—those shots!

"God!" he found himself whispering over and over again. "God! I was there. I was one of the men who loved her."

His trained mind grasped instantly at all the suggestive possibilities in the case. Suppose he had been seen and recognized waiting near her house. There would be a hundred to-day who would remember witnessing their meetings which yesterday had passed unnoticed. There would be a hundred voices raised in a question that he could not answer.

His presence on the Pike where he had driven a thousand times would have a sinister meaning for them. His opportune turning back at the danger point would meet with the unanswerable question of why he spoke no word of warning to the people he had met, and had not tried to explain the shot that had been fired almost at his side. . . . And suppose she had told someone that he had asked her to drive that night . . . and that she meant to go instead with someone else. . . .

He forced himself to read more of the article that later on disclosed the name of the dead woman's companion. The man's story was unimportant, for he was only a travelling salesman with a wife and family in St. Louis and he had cut and run hoping to keep his name out of the scandal, which he disconsolately reflected would ruin him.

Ruin! Connection with such an event must inevitably mean ruin for anyone even though their innocence be proven. Even his name, Gordon Renfrew, could not withstand such an assault. And yesterday he had thought that he could give it all up for her . . . to-day she was a dead woman, and he did not care. His pitiful, cheap romance lay in the dust, but he must fight to hold the respectability that she reached for even from the grave.

Mechanically he got into his clothes, for he reasoned that already his actions had been unnatural. His hours had always been regular, and at this time he should have been at the bank.

For the first time that morning he thought about his wife as he went slowly downstairs. What excuse could he give her for being late for breakfast when yesterday he had planned to put her out of his life without an explanation? But he found that there was no need for excuse because she was there to wait upon his breakfast with her usual sweet solicitude, unquestioning.

He accepted her attentions almost with humbleness. How safe and sane seemed home after his feet had touched upon the brink of tragedy; how comforting the sight of Lila pouring his

coffee and going about the duties that had become mere habit after their years together. She did not speak about the dreadful thing that filled his mind, but dismissed it with a shudder. She never read the papers when they contained such news, but she had a murmur of pity and sympathy for the poor soul who had met so cruel a fate.

As he watched her going about the room, even her simple print morning dress looked beautiful to him; he was so glad that she was willing to ignore the topic that was paramount in his tormented thoughts.

The doorbell rang as he was putting his cup to his lips, and he put it down untasted, listening intently to Beulah's footsteps approaching leisurely from the back of the house. His nerves were as taut as finely drawn wires and when the girl appeared at the door he was on his feet to meet her. He had caught the muffled tones of a man's voice when the door opened, and instinct warned him that the menace of inquiry had begun. But amazingly it was Mrs. Renfrew whom the visitors asked for. They were not selling things either, added Beulah, pleasantly fluttered, and they looked terrible grim.

Renfrew glanced at his wife and her unruffled serenity reassured him momentarily. What chance was there that the summons had to do with the dread that obsessed him? A dozen people came to their door every day upon a dozen harmless errands, and why should this be of a different nature?

Lila left the room and joined the visitors who were waiting in the hall. He heard the indistinguishable exchange of words that followed and then the entry of the group into the next room which was separated from the dining-room only by heavy portieres.

He cowered in his chair. His first surmise had been true after all; they were asking about him, almost from the first. He could not see the men, but he *knew*. The questioning voice had the cool, incisive demand of the law behind it and the other which chimed in now and then was a reporter's, perhaps the

very one whose veiled insinuations had run through the entire story of the tragedy in the paper he had read that morning. And Lila! What would she say, simple, truthful Lila, whose mind was an open book, incapable of guile, innocent of subterfuge.

"It is necessary for us to know certain details of Mr. Renfrew's movements last night, madam," informed the first speaker, without preamble. "If you will be frank and direct with me, it will perhaps be easier for everyone concerned."

There was a pause; then Lila's voice came, calm and self-contained as usual, bearing no hint of awakened suspicion or alarm.

"I can't see," she said, "why my husband's actions should interest you or why you should imagine that I should hesitate in naming them. If it will end this interview, I will say that we retired at our usual hour, half-past nine, and slept until morning. Previous to that he had dinner and was somewhere about the house."

In the library the two men looked at each other. Some women carry conviction with their lightest word. It was impossible to connect Lila Renfrew with so vulgar a thing as a lie, impossible to credit her with the finesse to carry one through. Before her placid demeanor, suspicion crumbled to a baseless fabric; and Renfrew himself, pillar of church and society! It would be a bold newspaper indeed, that would attempt to drag him from his pedestal. Apologetic and secretly glad that they had gone no further, they accepted her simple statement that admitted no refutation. And as the door closed upon them, Lila parted the curtains and entered the dining-room.

He still sat, huddled in his place, gray faced, clutching at the disordered tablecloth. His eyes met hers in a long look.

"Why—why—did you do it?" he said at last.

Her face warmed into a painful blush, and she looked at him in a sort of horror until her eyes fell away from the strained intensity of his.

"Do you think I could talk of our affairs to that common policeman," she stammered. "Do you think I would let the people of this town know that I used my own spare room—"

Then the brooding maternity of a

soul that has never known motherhood softened her lips, and she added with the inscrutable reasoning of a thoroughly good and self righteous woman:

"What business was it of theirs where you were last night?"



HIC! JACET

By Robert H. Davis

A TISSUE-PAPER maidenette
 Above a bowl of punch was set
 Afloat upon which in the wet
 She spied a brandied cherry.
 Defying Destiny she laughed,
 Then reaching for the crimson craft,
 She tottered, tumbled in, and quaffed
 A draft that made her merry.

A flotsam lemon floating by,
 Wrecked on the reefs of rock and rye,
 She sighted with her paper eye.
 The breakers closed around her.
 An olive with a toothpick mast
 Upon the tide came sailing past.
 "Help, Captain; I am sinking fast!"
 Alas! the mixture drowned her.

Along then came at early dawn,
 A thirsty butler, all forlorn,
 Who figured out that punch was born
 To be put under cover.
 He quaffed until the bowl was bare,
 Absorbed the tissue maiden there—
 Unconsciously became her heir—
 And took possession of her.

There is no moral to this song
 Save "life is fleeting"—death is long,
 Especially when one gets in wrong,
 And time cannot erase it.
 The butler who was mildly pied,
 Unto his small hall bedroom hied,
 Murmuring sadly as he died:
 "Hic! hic! hic! hic!"

Hic! Jacet."

THE REASON

By G. Vere Tyler

SHE lay dead.

He was gazing upon her—upon the face he had always thought the most beautiful in the world.

At eighteen he had heard her say: "When I am thirty I will have written such wonderful things that I shall be famous!"

There was no doubt.

At thirty he had heard her say: "At forty I shall have written such wonderful things that I shall be famous!"

She looked wistful.

At forty he had heard her say: "At fifty I shall have written such wonderful things that I shall be famous!"

She looked alarmed. . . .

At fifty she was dead, and she had printed one little poem.

The reason was she had had three husbands. . . .



HER FRIENDS

By Mary K. Schumann

THERE was a woman who was determined not to grow old, and to attain that end she kept her heart young and her lips laughing. She interested herself in the games of youth; she swam, she danced, she hunted the shy golf ball up the hills and down the dales.

When she was thirty-two, she looked twenty-two, and when she was forty she passed for one of the younger set.

It was at this time, however, that her friends began to say, "How well she holds her age!" And when they gos-

siped among themselves over the steaming tea urn, they recounted the years which had passed since her début.

Soon the woman noticed a change in the attitude of the young people. They accorded her a certain deference, and were considerate of her obviously, telling her to rest here, not to overdo, to be more careful.

The woman wept to herself. "I have failed," she cried.

Yet she was as young and as beautiful as ever.



FORTY-FIVE

By Philip Curtiss

THE cathedral clock in the hallway clicked in officious manner, warning that in just four minutes it meant to strike seven, deny it who might, as Robert Johnstone came down for dinner.

The statement is significant, for Johnstone was essentially a four-minute-of-seven man, granted that seven was the hour appointed for dinner. Equally significant was the fact that although seven was the hour appointed for dinner, neither Mrs. Burney, his hostess, nor her daughter, Mrs. Fayne, had as yet made the slightest move, the former still pecking away, dowager-like, at her knitting and the latter scratching away on a note and ignoring all of her mother's suggestions. With a person who really excited her interest, Marian Fayne was a quick and a clever woman, but she utterly refused to use either brains or consideration in the presence of anyone whom she did not consider worthy of them, and her mother she candidly included in this class.

She might, indeed, have sat at her correspondence for an hour longer, utterly regardless of anyone else in the house, had not the sight of Johnstone, in dinner clothes, reminded her that she was frankly hungry herself, so sealing her letter, she arose with insolent calm and remarked:

"It should get there to-morrow night."

The statement was addressed at nobody in particular, but as it was the only one which Marian had made in an hour which came within the scope of her mother's intellect, the latter gathered it in as her own.

"At the very least," she replied. "If

it catches the eight-forty-three it will get there to-morrow morning."

Such calculations made up the whole of Mrs. Burney's mental existence and she put them forth with supreme content, as she did the reply to her daughter's next question:

"What day of the month is it?"

"The eighth—the eighth of June."

Mrs. Burney, in short, had a soul which could just about cope with the days of the month and she would have gloated if someone had supposed that it was the eighth of December and she had been able to set him right. There was not, indeed, in that room, what could fairly be called an interchange of ideas. Every remark which had been made to that moment had merely been shot off into the air, as one crumples a cigar-band and flicks it away, but Johnstone at least saw fit to catch up this one.

"The eighth of June," he echoed hopefully, "my birthday." But the news was vital to nobody save himself and without rejoinder the two women left the room. It was partly the way that he said it and partly the unimportance of the fact itself. In that high temple of modernism birthdays were as vulgar and insignificant as birth itself and laundry bills and the Prohibition party and new religions. Robert Johnstone was a friend, possibly the only real friend of the Burney household, but he might have been thirty or sixty, moral or immoral, robust or tubercular, for all that Marian Fayne actually cared. As for Mrs. Burney, she was still absorbed in the fact that it really was June and not December.

As a matter of record, however, Robert Johnstone was just forty-five, and

although it was not the question at issue, he was also robust and quite moral. A description of Johnstone, indeed, is so simple that it actually baffles narration, for the plain, unqualified, unbelievable fact is that he was a good man—just that, without any ifs or buts—good legally, morally, socially, spiritually, and any other way that you chose to look at it, and the astounding thing is that it is so contrary to instinct to record it. But there are such men, and, in the same manner, there are good women, although Marian Fayne was not one of them.

Johnstone, indeed, had not even the irritating saintliness of perfection, otherwise Marian Fayne could not have endured him for a fraction of a second. He looked forward exactly as much as she did to the first sip of the dinner cocktail. He would bow to her over the top of the glass in merry good-fellowship. He would regret it if it went to her head, as it sometimes did, but he would neither show his regret nor be surprised at the fact, for, in spite of his inner makeup, he took the world as it came, and it might have been either his fault or his merit that he demanded from himself absolute discipline and, from everyone else, nothing under the sun. His virtue was that of the monk and not that of the evangelist.

As typical of this there could have been no more perfect illustration than his humor as Marian Fayne and her mother went in their separate ways from the room. It was not because he was unaware of their habits that he was dressed on the minute although they would take nearly another hour. The thing happened forty-nine times in a year, and, on the fiftieth, they would be dressed to the dot of seven. Most men would have lingered for the forty-nine times and chanced the fiftieth, but Johnstone had a Puritan soul and trimmed his lamps every night. He accepted the fact without even a shrug, sat down at the open window with its view of the harbor still bathed in broad daylight and pondered the fact that he was actually forty-five.

For the decimals and the half-decimals of life drive in age with a sternness which adjacent figures quite fail to attain. Twenty-nine is blissfully flip-pant but thirty momentous; forty-four is fairly indefinite but forty-five is tremendous. Yet with Johnstone it took the cold reality of the figures to make life seem anything more than begun. For him the years had advanced with such unspotted and youthful idealism that the bulk of life and the accomplishment of all dreams seemed just as much in the future at forty-five as they had at eighteen and at twenty-one. For although his life had been marked by few exhilarations it had been equally free from irrevocable errors and these alone it is which rob the buoyancy of the future to build up the hard reality of the past.

Johnstone's life, indeed, had been as sweet and as sweetly melancholy as his soul. It had been one of patient struggle and its optimism lay in patient struggle rewarded. Unrelentingly honest, open-hearted, courteous, and powerful, his career had advanced on smooth, even lines, year after year, until he was now just such a bulwark as his looks and the obvious regard of Marian Fayne might have implied.

It was not, indeed, because of material failure that Robert Johnstone found forty-five grim; it was the great other half of life that showed him his lack—the sentimental existence in which life had passed him by and left him longing in vain, for in spite of his plodding slowness, in spite of his calculated accuracy, it was impossible that a mind so alive, a perception so delicate and a body so vigorous should not have all of the yearnings and all of the dreams that come to men of more obvious fire.

But Johnstone was one of the men who had loved and lost. His love had been a tremendous one, just such a love as a man of his make would demand—the burning desire of youth and the quiet companionship of maturity. With Eleanor Pryor, whom he had loved, he had found what he sought. They had had everything in common, wit, brains,

environment, tastes, instincts, and pure hearts. They could spend hours in exciting converse and hours in silent content. Eleanor had filled every ideal in his heart.

But Eleanor Pryor had married the other man. Why? Why *do* such things happen? It may have been a moody half-hour; it may have been Johnstone's own cautious deliberation; it was much more likely the drama of a sudden courtship. For the man whom Eleanor Pryor had married to become Eleanor Thurston had not even the compensating dramatic virtue of not deserving her. There was nothing the matter with him. He was a good husband and he made her happy, but Johnstone knew and Eleanor knew that Thurston was in every way his inferior. He may have known it himself.

Johnstone had been thirty-eight when Eleanor had married and with that event his actual hopes had died, but he had taken it like a man and a gentleman. In other words he had taken it like Johnstone. Too many times before, in love and in life, had he seen his houses of cards built up with painstaking persistence and then tumble to the carpet with the placing of the very last card. For Eleanor had not been his only love. She had been merely the great and the final one and had only served to give the conclusive stroke to his lesser failures, for even in his previous loves he had been pursued by a peculiar Nemesis which had checked each attempt with that ingenuity of unforeseen events with which Fate works out decisions.

And yet he had faced his loss not grimly but optimistically. He had known and admired other women and since then had seen hope dawn with each friendship; but Johnstone was a man utterly honest with himself and with his love. Seven years after that marriage he knew that if, at a given moment, he had received a word from Eleanor Pryor and from any other woman on earth, there would not have been in his heart one second's hesitation, and with any test less final than this he

could not be content. To a lighter man it would have been but an incident. To him it was absolute.

People expected him to marry. He was sociable and popular, eminently eligible, and young in his looks and his heart, but he knew himself that he never would. Up to this moment it had been merely the fact of that other marriage, but now it was the appalling finality of forty-five—five years from gray hairs.

The concreteness of the idea aroused in Johnstone, as he sat by the open window, a bitter resentment, unusual to one of his quiet acceptance of facts. In most of the affairs of life he was a firm believer in the law of compensation, and he was willing to apply it to himself as mercilessly as he applied it to others. He did not ask what he deserved but what he had earned; what he had fought for and gained—in cold figures. But in this one thing he thought he had earned. Fate had not played with him fair; She had not paid up what She owed. He knew women and honored them; he served them and found infinite content in the service; he conscientiously idealized them. He knew that he had just such a mind and a heart and a frame as nature needs in making her generations, but yet he was cancelled from all of the scores.

Other men whom he knew, drunkards and spendthrifts and profligates, had found the wives they desired without even the item of repentance. Those men had given away, thrown away, sullied, their inheritance with waifs and wastrels and then found clean women to marry them, sometimes unwitting, sometimes perfectly witting. Men whom he knew had taken one wife, cast her aside and taken another. He knew the ways of the world without especial repugnance. He had witnessed sin in its most attractive forms, opportunities for it had reached out their arms to him himself and now he realized that in his fight for a reward he had scrupulously denied himself the pleasures of dalliance to find himself at the

end with neither the pleasures nor the reward. A man of desire, sentiment, delicacy, and restraint, his active life was on its last quarter without life's most vital experience.

In this direction Johnstone's reflections were not so much interrupted as illustrated by the reappearance of Marian Fayne, laughing, inviting, refreshing in the perfect accomplishment of those rites of luxury for which she had delayed her section of the universe for nearly an hour, but in the very perfection of the result there seemed to be complete justification of the delay, for Marian came into the room transformed, not merely in the dainty seductiveness of her black evening gown and beautifully wayward hair, but in that complete and impenetrable girlishness and guilelessness which can be achieved only by women who have blasted guilelessness twenty years before.

Marian Fayne, indeed, had achieved complete immunity from sentimental possibilities by a process exactly opposite to that which had fallen to Johnstone. Love had not avoided her; she had grabbed it and burned it up. She had denied herself nothing and yet, so far as one could see, she had collected all the rewards and paid none of the penalties.

At eighteen she had married a dotard whom she had bullied and tantalized into his grave, with which act she became a rich woman. At thirty she had married again, a man of her own age, an utter but brilliant libertine, one of those very men of whom Johnstone had thought with such bitterness, but a man who, by his social brilliancy, by the international reputation of his position, by the very audacity of his exploits, represented to Marian and her mother the incarnation of everything that was desirable, in fact everything that was necessary. The marriage had run two years of a stormy course and then Marian had left him, keeping only his name, which was all that she had wanted from the beginning and which she had never the slightest intention of giv-

ing up. There were no pities to be wasted on that match and nobody had wasted any. It had ended with honors even and dislike mutual.

It was not, however, as odd as it seemed that a man like Johnstone had reached such intimacy with a woman like Marian Fayne. She had already attained everything necessary to her success and, resting leisurely on her honors, she was a woman of superb attractiveness and even delicious response. She was far from being without intellectual force and in the solid, rockbound intellect of Johnstone she found inspiration or satisfaction which came to her from no other man. He was, moreover, probably the only man of her intimate acquaintance who had not, in some degree, fallen a victim to her, but just how much this had been a factor it is probable that both she and Johnstone had decidedly underestimated.

They *had* underestimated, that is, but as she came into the room on this evening, wistful, girlish, and eager, and met Johnstone's look of moody regret a trace of another element, an element which had probably been there all the time and lain dormant quickened and crept into the air. As for Johnstone he was still rebellious from the reflections of forty-five; as for Marian Fayne, it was June and he was a handsome man. They felt it come—there was no innocence in those minds so trained and yet so different and in other times and with other manners they might have sighed, might have started, but these two drank the cocktail and their eyes met over the top. Theirs was not melodrama but polite parlor drama which sneered, for even Johnstone, in his outer aspects, had a smile which could sneer.

For the cocktail came immediately with Marian's entrance, which, too, was highly significant. Other guests, all other guests, might wait for an hour looking at sunsets and Japanese prints; when Marian came dinner began. There was a vague sense of Mrs. Burney hovering in hallways and that probably explained the mechanics of it.

Nor did Mrs. Burney cease to be anything but a vague sense during the dinner where she sat and talked irrelevantly of lettuce and letters. In her moments of silence she was probably wondering whether it might not really be December after all, and if not, why not. As for Marian Fayne and Johnstone they talked very little; they thought; which, in the light of June and the black evening dress and the carelessly floating hair and the cocktail and the rest of it all was dangerous. In the flippant, modern sense of the word, it was *wicked*—that thinking.

Nor after dinner did they talk any more. They walked towards the shore, not a sandy shore but a bleak one, with grim, jutting rocks leaping sheer from the water, on the top of which they paused in the face of a night-wind half-blustering and with a trace of mist, which blew little strands of hair more seductively than ever and stiffened garments in folds and flat surfaces and made faces glow and burn, while Marian stood with a man's coat turned jauntily up under her ears looking unmovingly out to sea, like a fearless Valkyrie, and Johnstone glared grimly at the pin-point of yellow flame from the revolving light on Comer's Point, three miles over the harbor. But the mist grew thick and the wind was wet, so they wandered back to the house, still silent, and sat by the fire which the mechanism had kindled at just the right time and in just the right place. The black evening dress figured once more.

They sat by the fire and pondered, Johnstone with his chin in his hand, Marian upright and challenging, her eyes reflecting the flames. They thought, but no, Marian Fayne did not think. She radiated. So also might Thais have radiated, and Delilah, and Mary Magdalene—before the Event. If words were said, they were immaterial. They always are. If they touch the subject they are purposeless. By the fact they become self-destructive.

But Johnstone thought and thought bitterly, for his question was answered now. His chance had come, as sooner

or later it comes to every man if he cares to take it, and the answer was only another question—"Why not?"

He might just as well have said it aloud, for Marian Fayne knew most of his life. She knew his character, she knew, best of all, his longings and her splendid skill could have carried discussion of them into the impersonal mood, retaining, quite at the same time, all of the personal. But Johnstone did not ask the question aloud. He only asked of himself—"Why not?"

Yes, why not? He asked it again and again. He had lived and longed and his conscience had beat down revolt, but now with the fire and the darkened room and the wayward hair and the dress, revolt was gaining the upper hand—with the fire and the darkened room and the wayward hair and the dress—and with forty-five.

Like Marian Fayne he had a mind which could think impersonally even concerning himself and even in such a moment. He could see all sides of a question of conduct in the flash of an eye and reckon them all as logically as the rise and fall of a stock. But now he had no need to think in the flash of an eye; there were hours for his thinking; he could conjure up each idea, ponder it, catalogue it, and dispose of it at his leisure, for the clock in the hall ticked slowly, the fire burned gently and from the woman beside him came only an aspect of waiting—the woman beside him in whom seven devils still reigned.

Why not? He had lived and waited and now he could see no reason why not. At other times there had been many reasons, the reasons which usually prevail, but none of these prevailed now.

A man who lives as Johnstone had lived has his future wife to consider; but Johnstone had no future wife. His future wife was the wife of another man, she herself had known love and was gone.

A man who lives as Johnstone had lived keeps himself pure because the women who tarnish purity are flaring creatures of low mind and low words;

but this was a woman of intellect and refinement and daintiness and appreciation.

A man who lives as Johnstone had lived preserves his own soul in order that, in its fall, the soul of a woman may not fall, too, and fall deeper than his. But this woman had no soul; she had lived with a dotard and a libertine and what she had kept to herself beyond that she had kept not from innocence but from deliberate judgment.

A man who lives as Johnstone had lived keeps his armor bright for the future; but Johnstone had no future; he was forty-five, five years and then—Fate owed him this.

And the woman beside him asked him why not. She asked him in look and in attitude and in caress, while the fire burned and the shadows flickered and the clock ticked on. She saw no reason why not, Johnstone saw no reason why not; and yet for an hour neither one of them moved. The flames died down and the coals glowed red and the clock ticked on and sounded the hours which neither one of them heard while she sat eager, expectant, and he sat grim, cold and doubting.

The clock sounded the hour, impartial and patient, and began on the quarter, the half, and three-quarters. He began to hear it once more.

"Why-not; why-not, why-not?" it asked him, he asked himself, and yet he sat there.

The woman grew tired of the clock and the silence and looked away and her hand began to beat a little tattoo. She put a log on the fire, the flames reflecting red on her face. She hummed a snatch of a song, then stopped in the middle for she knew she was breaking the spell; but in silence she looked at Johnstone and in silence she urged. He moved slowly, dropped back, moved again, and at last they arose, he doubting and fearing, she silent but calm.

The quiet mechanism had turned out the lights of the lower floor save those in the hall and these they turned down themselves, quite as mechanically; but it was colder there in the hall; they

were coming back into facts; and yet, as they took each other's hands to guide through the darkness and up the stairs, the warmth of the fire came back and its mystery and its enticement. The question reopened. It waned but refused to be downed.

The second landing brought light and more facts, nearer facts, but the question clung to them even in facts and they stood there and faced each other, Johnstone still and debating, Marian smiling in thought. Beyond her lay her own door, half-open and with a soft, orange-colored lamp-shade glowing within. Her back was towards it, but Johnstone saw and as he turned his eyes to hers there flashed up again that question which could not escape him even in light, that question—"Why not?"

He asked it now almost in desperation. He began to say it against his own heart and Marian felt the change as she had felt the first rebuffs of the outer air when they had come into the lighted hall. It was almost in anger, almost the cry of threatened defeat in which she asked him once more and this time she asked it in words:

"Why not?"

"Why not?" he echoed, his voice harsh and hollow and lacking all the convincingness of his thoughts. "Why not?" he repeated in bitterness, but neither his tones nor hers had the ring and the smoothness which went with Robert Johnstone and Marian Fayne. At the sound he looked at her almost in revelation and saw what she was, exactly as she was seeing through him. She took the lapel of his coat, half-coaxed, half-caressed.

"I really believe that you are afraid."

He lifted eyes leaden and unprotesting, almost in appeal. Never before, not even that night, had she been so close to him. In his eyes she still was slender and girlish while the orange lamp still glowed beyond; but he was unmoved. He did not even attempt self-justification, he merely muttered as if to himself:

"Afraid? I wonder if that is just it." Then, reason returning and still unwilling to spare himself in his logic, he went on, in dogged self-accusation:

"Yes, that is why not; that is why not; that is the virtue of men like me. We call it purity, we call it keeping straight, we call it religion, but the answer is that we are just simply afraid."

And so spoke Johnstone—a good man. He accused himself and denied his virtue. He couldn't do ill and he called it fear. But Marian Fayne saw him just as he was. She granted to Johnstone the virtue which he had denied to himself. She had seen a good man and she knew it, but the knowledge served only to bring to her eyes the look of that than which Hell hath no greater fury.

* * * * *

So that is the story of Johnstone. And how did it end? It didn't end, it went on. Life does. It might have been that the very letter which Marian Fayne had been writing contained the

knowledge of Thurston's death, for such things happen, even in life.

But that would have settled only the question of Johnstone and not the question of forty-five. It would have been but a tawdry reward and why should Thurston, himself a good man, be called on to recompense Johnstone's restraint?

No, it went on. The night passed still and the clock ticked away and from time to time Mrs. Burney tossed in her sleep and counted the trains.

For Johnstone had no reward, except the reward that daylight found him still with a clean heart. He and Marian met and talked and the days went along in the manner of days. At first Marian was coldly polite and at times she was scornful and jeering, but after a while she lost even that. She was still late for dinner and he was on time.

But this, simply this, did come to pass—that as their gaze met over the glasses at night, a man looked into her eyes without giving way. And that was good for the soul of Marian Fayne.



IOLANTHE

By B. P. Clark, Jr.

THE maple by my door
 Stands like a slim girl in the sunlight,
 Lifting up her golden weight of hair
 With slender arms;
 Letting it fall about her body,
 Standing, head-bowed, gold-clouded,
 With her silver feet among the crimson leaves.



THE chief knowledge that a man gets by reading books is the knowledge that very few of them are worth reading.

THE AWAKENING

By Olive Fisher

A YOUNG man, sad-faced and tender-eyed, strolled idly through a beautiful garden. It was an ideal summer's day and in the trees above the birds twittered joyously, while the soft rays of the sun smiled genially from the blue skies.

Fairest blossoms greeted him everywhere. The air was balmy and its sweet fragrance filled his very soul with joy. Now he walked near borders of mignonette, then to wonderful beds of hyacinths and roses and violets. From there to paths redolent with verberna. The distant meadows beckoned him and on he wandered to the sweet clover and new-mown hay. Back came the days of his happy boyhood on grand-

father's farm, reflections of his youthful sweetheart, and always through his mind Lowell's tender words of "a day in spring"—the poem she had loved so well. Now and then he passed on the mossy banks of a brook and watched it as it danced and gurgled over the crystal pebbles.

So overwhelmed was he at this great effulgence that he drew a long, lingering sigh of contentment.

Suddenly a soft voice interrupted his reveries. Could he believe his ears?

He turned his head slowly and gazed into the tender eyes of the white-clad nurse in the dentist's office, who for the fourth time was just repeating, "Can you spit now?"



THE SECRET

By Lizette Woodworth Reese

A CROSS the high and happy sun,
The houses stare and stare at me;
Until the rosy hours are done,
Their wise, hard eyes I see.

I feel so naked, so unnamed,
As I were counted bone by bone,
Stared to the very heart and tamed,
And all my secret known.

I cannot drop it in the sea;
Or hide it in a garden plot;—
I loved, and gave the all of me;
I loved and am forgot!

LITERATURE IN AMERICA

(CIRCA 1915)

By Harry Powers Story

I—A Letter

deer Fren Gus—well Gus I wood of wrote You a Letter bee 4 this letter I am writing to You only I was a frade You had dyed or sum thing on a/c that You did not write me no letter sinct the lass week in Aug. well Gus I and You is 2 Good frens for a 2 sense postal stamp two spoil Our frens ship. well Gus that little jane was out at the B. B. park yes today watch in us prack-tus and that rotten Conne Mack bawled me Out for loosing that 1 two 0 game in 10 innings lass Saderday when it was my 1st start this season. well Gus I got a good notion to Jump two the federal Leag and let this here rotten ball club loose the pennant. I shoood Worry I guess Gus be caws they do not never give me noth thing to eat any ways and tie Cob nor none of them Guys cood of made good if they was starve to death all the time like what I am Gus. well Gus if You got any imajine Nation a tall You kin see these Guys without my pitich in in the world Serious. You wood of laff your selve horse.. . .

The chill breezes of early winter blew through the trees, and softly, one by one, the dead leaves fell upon the deserted road where Nathaniel Hawthorne had walked as a boy.

II—Another Letter

Editor Joke Periodical which is issue humorously each week one time.

Hon. Dear Editor—Recently of yore I have had Hon. employment at Osaka & Oyama, Japanese Groceries where I

do so. I worked the most serious of my old fashioned muscles in cellar of that Hon. Food Emporium where I expended considerable pained hours each days of Sept. enrolling barrells of great everdupois into wagons which is up hill.

While engaging my Hon. energy in this task of labor, long come youthful American young man with long chin and Hon. God Bless You expression like Hon. Pres. Mr. Wilson when he kiss Hon. Bryan fare you well and fire him to Chataalkqua platform for lecturing.

"Togo," young American youth he say so, "I been taking statistics on your laborious uselessness and find that in enrolling 1 barrell 46 3/16 feet upward from cellar to uphill sidewalk you makes 975 64/5 useless motions. In other words," he squib, "you make too much industry."

I agreeable to this first class of wisdom and take sit-down next to him with perspiring elbows and a relaxation of all muscular energy from laboriousness of Hon. toil. . . .

The big red automobile crowded with sight-seeing tourists rolled ponderously down the street. "To your left, Ladees and Ge'mmen," the guide was announcing, "you see the house on the corner where Robert Louis Stevenson onct lived."

III—Fiction

"Schmoos, Mawruss," Abe broke in, "I heard such a nonsense as that already from Feder the buyer for Bleidstadt and Goldheimer's, and that Stroh-

schneider dont no more believe it as you do; Mawruss I bet yer if I would show them swell 2073's *oder* a perfect 38 model of that new Fall 982 near silk furlana cape them *Schnorrers* would give me a *Schlag* on the arm but we would not get it a single order without we should give them a ninety days extension of credit."

"Well, *Gott sei Dank*," Mawruss replied to his perspiring partner as he picked the *Kalbfleisch mit Knockerl* from his teeth and brushed a spot of *Gefilte fisch* from his coat sleeve, "we should *bibble* Abe about a *Windbeutel* like him. Like a deteckative I watch him yesterday, Abe, and he plays it auction pinochle all afternoon till quitting time with G. Feldman of Fligleman and Mayer, Ladies and Misses Suits *Von Russeland*. And for him Abe you should always get out the first credit customers seggars from the safe. . . .

The children played along the grass grown path. Their shrill shouts and merry laughter rang out happily as they crossed the little garden where Edgar Allan Poe once walked with his true love.

IV—War Correspondence

In a taxicab we went to look for this war. There were eight of us, not counting the chauffeur, who did not count, and the stuffy little cab smelled terribly of unbathed human bodies. Not one of us had had a bath in eight weeks. The smell was terrific. It was a regular taxicab which in times of peace did service up and down the streets of Paris. It had a regular taxicab meter which counted up our charges as we sped over the kilometres toward the firing line. Its license number was 91642-724 and a neatly framed little card in polite French gave the list of tariffs. There was a little red flag on the meter too, which might be turned up or turned down, depending on whether the taxicab was engaged or at liberty. We all wore straw hats and carried no baggage. We had not bathed for eight weeks.

As we neared the first line of trenches we were politely accosted by a dapper little officer clad in perfect-fitting khaki of dark gray. Hat in hand he asked for our passports. "*Vouley von havec the passe partou, Gentlehomies*," he said in his perfect French. Everywhere we were met with this uniform politeness and everywhere the fetid rancid odors of unwashed bodies. We, ourselves, had not bathed for . . .

The Shade of Thomas Paine glanced sadly about him and shivered as if from the cold. With downcast head and drooping shoulders he turned sorrowfully away.

V—A Detective Story

. . . "You have heard of psychochromatic iteration before, Professor Kennedy," Craig's beautiful client had asked with hectic eagerness, yet not waiting for the criminologist's psychological reply.

Of course I had heard of cases where there had been no inherent or hereditary predisposition toward psychochromatic iteration, people who apparently of normal mental and physical health had encountered the disease and developed psychochromes themselves but I waited for Craig to reply.

"Dr. Vodelfindelheinkamp, the eminent criminologist of Buda-Pest and Kalamazoo," he replied to her eager question, as he reached under the laboratory table to ascertain if the blotting paper had reached a 97.681 per cent. of saturation and had been thoroughly permeated with the deadly photographic radio-activity of the filterable viruses, "has recently perfected his delicate apparatus, whose mechanism weighing only two and one-half kilograms can at once detect the embryo psychochromatic iteration of the human hair . . ."

Silently the first flakes of the winter's snow fell toward the earth and soon a soft white blanket covered the little mound where Samuel Langhorne Clemens lay buried.

VI—A Philosophical Discourse

"Will sor," remarked Mr. Dooley, "I say by th' paypurs that th' Alleys is goin' to stop foightin' an' ind th' horribul war; thay hev tooke th' finul steps an' th' thing is as good as sittled now."

"Whut is ut thay ar're doin'?" asked Mr. Hennessy.

"Will sor," replied Mr. Dooley, "The Alleys ar-re tirud av th' way th' war has bin goin'; 'Tis fast bacomin' a nuisance. Whin respectable Christuns goes to war for th' purposes av slaughter an' devastatin' Yurup an' all th' naytions jine with thim, ixcept th' Irish-Amuricans an' Chinees, agin th' Dootch 'faith, an' 'tis not to be expicted that th' war will continu fer iver. King Jarge is fast losin' his concayte whin them sub-mayreens an' Zipplines is knockin' th' spots off av th' flayte. Father Killy says to me the Rushians are rushin' back to Sain Paytrogad which is th' nayme av one av their haythen saints an' the patron of futracers.

"But," continued Mr. Dooley, "th' Dootchmen hev hired a lot av Irish choffers fer thim airships and hes promised Home Rule fer Ireland if th' Kizer wins . . ."

The busy rumble of the early morning traffic crashed out in harsh discord as the laden trucks and wagons drove noisily past the house where Oliver Wendell

Holmes had spent the last years of his life.

VII—A Poem

This war is Europe sure is bad and make the children all feel sad because they know they've lost their home and now they must the wide world roam in search of clothes now Winter's come, and with it's chill we all feel glum. The cannon's roar and shot and shell must make the kids all feel like Hell, for it's been six months since they saw their brother, and perhaps their Pa is down there on that firing line a-digging trenches all the time with bullets flying thick and fast, it makes us hope this war's the last.

They fire bullets in the air to give the other guys a scare and make us awful glad we ain't affected with War's horrid taint.

And down in Mexico they fight with sixteen presidents every night who, with the brightness of they day are once again turned into clay. They make them stand against a wall and shoot them with at the bugle's call before they get a chance to nod or even whisper, "Oh My Gawd" . . .

The blue bird hopped from the branch of the tree to the gabled roof of the little white house where Walt Whitman was born.



A SCANDAL is something that should not be told, and that everyone is glad to hear.



MARRIAGE is a lottery in which men stake their liberty and women their lack of it.



BALANCED RATIONS

By Donald A. Kahn

In Fiction

1 ordinary girl. { 3,000,000 girls with starlike eyes of blue. 6,000,000 with melting eyes of brown. 8,000,000 girls with tender eyes of grey. 10,000,000 girls with eyes of every shade. 12,000,000 with an adorable little nose apiece. 13,000,000 with a smile as clean and as pure as the morning. 15,000,000 girls with a form divine. A billion witty girls.

In Fact

3,000,000 girls with beady eyes of blue. 6,000,000 with watery eyes of brown. 8,000,000 girls with grey eyes hard as flint. 10,000,000 with eyes of no color at all. 12,000,000 with an oversize nose apiece. 13,000,000 girls with a coyote's smile. 15,000,000 shaped like a bag of cement. A billion dull girls. } 1 beautiful girl.



AN APPRECIATION

By H. S. Haskins

THEY call my wife extravagant. Small wonder! They see what she makes a dollar do and straightway mistake it for the work of two dollars. Hence she is charged with twice the outlay that she has actually made and the cry "There goes a spendthrift" follows her down the street. Did she but waste fifty cents of every dollar, what she had bought would look so pitifully meagre that her neighbors would say "How prudent she is!" thinking the squandered half dollar saved. Thus the true economist is called extravagant and the wasteful housewife frugal. But so long as her husband understands, let the world wag on!



GILBERT GROWS UP

By Harold de Polo

SHE was of the kind who read Laurence Hope indiscriminately, no matter what the type of man listening. In some cases, especially with youth, it is awfully effective. At least, when Cora Sithers stretched back on the divan with the Turkish hangings, occasionally raising her drooped lids to glance at her listener with a certain lavish languidness—at the becoming passages—she could nine times out of ten win her point. This was to allow her the privilege of firmly refusing, and of course further incensing, the man to take her in his arms.

Latterly she had found the perfect listener—a youngster who sat with misty eyes, and tense nerves, and trembling hands, and wished to God that he could have her on the starry, moonlit desert, he a fierce Arab chieftain and she a Circassian Princess, and alternately whisper and hiss his love for her, and kiss her lips and eyes and nose and chin and ears and neck and hair. They *do* think that way; anyway, when Mrs. Sithers read she could make 'em!

Certainly Gilbert did. For precisely the seventh time that afternoon he essayed to rise from the cushions where he sprawled at her feet and furl his arms about her; but she, with a firm little gesture that caressed his hand and at the same time held him down, warned him for precisely the seventh time in precisely the same words:

"Naughty boy—mustn't! . . . You're fearfully impetuous, Gil—and you forget!"

She smiled at him softly, even tenderly; as if to say she'd like to but couldn't; he knew why.

He brushed a moist hand across a

wet forehead, flinging out his arms and speaking vehemently:

"Cora! Cora, I can't help it, dearest—I just can't! . . . God! Why do you read to me like that—with those eyes, that voice—if you don't want me to get you in my arms and hold you and kiss you? You're wonderful—wonderful, dearest! Your eyes—your voice—the tremble in your body— . . . I want you, Cora—want you for mine, mine, *mine*! Don't—don't be cruel!"

She smiled with a pathetic whimsicality:

"Can't I even *read* to my—my boy?"

Instantly he was on his feet, his eyes tender, wistful, remorseful. He still tried to fling his arms around her.

"Dearest! I didn't mean *that*! . . .

I meant, Cora, that I can't stand your reading and sitting here quietly and passively; I simply *must* take you in my arms, and tell you how I love you, and kiss your eyes and hair and lips and just worship you. Oh, Cora, I love you—love you!"

She looked at him; and her look and her words might have quite well meant one thing or the other:

"We can't—can't always have what we love just when we want it, Gil!"

One takes things like that as one wants to—at twenty-one:

"Cora!"

More vehement words; more dramatic postures; more arm-reaching. Another enigmatically whimsical smile; another firmly caressing reproof; another "Mustn't—Gil boy!"

"But it's not right—it's not right, Cora! You *do* love me—you *know* you *do*—and just because you happen to be married to someone else you don't

give a hang about ruining your life by what you believe to be and call your loyalty! . . . Can't you be sensible—*won't* you be sensible? You know that you don't love George Sithers—he's over ten years older than you are and he's traveling nearly half the year. He's not your kind mentally, and you know it. You've *told* me that it's lovely to be able to read to *me*—and I'll bet *he* wouldn't understand the things—the things *we* do! . . . We're just made for each other—you and I—always you and I! Come, dearest, *please* be sensible and grasp our happiness while we may!"

"Would that be right, Gilbert?" she asked quietly.

"Right—right? . . . Hang right! . . . But it *would* be right—it *would*! If you're unhappy, if you've made a mistake, it's *not* right to stay together. The man, if the woman tells him, ought to be decent enough and fair enough to give up his wife when he finds that she no longer loves him and *does* love somebody else! But I can't make you see it that way—God knows I've tried. Please, dearest—*please*! If you won't run off with me, as I want, go and tell Sithers the whole story and he'll free you if he's a man!"

Her dark eyes grew darker and larger and they blinked just once. She smiled that particular smile that always made him gulp and feel like protecting her and kissing away her pain.

"Have you ever thought of George's side of it?" she asked sadly. "Have you pictured *his* feelings?"

He frowned, his words coming intently:

"That doesn't matter—that isn't the question. The point is, dearest, that he's just one—and we're two. Oh, no; you can't tell *me* that it's right for *one* to ruin two other lives—two younger lives—two lives that throb just for each other! . . . Can't you see it—can't you, *can't* you?"

"No, Gil! Suppose I *had* made a mistake; suppose I *had* learned that George wasn't what I had thought him; suppose I—I *had* seen—someone else

— . . . Do you think it would be right—do you think it would be honourable—for me to break my bargain, to—"

He cut in abruptly, feverishly:

"You're insane, Cora—insane! Those ideas are antiquated—cruel, sinful, ruinous! . . . No, dearest; you've found that you don't love Sithers and that you *do* love me—and for God's sake don't further wreck your life by staying on. Be brave—brave and sensible. Grasp your happiness now—while you're young and while we have all the world before us. Come with me—come, dearest, for I love you, love you!"

She shook her head slowly, perhaps a bit sadly:

"Think of George—away from me and loving me and trusting me. No, even if I *did* love you madly, would it be right for me to leave him? . . . Perhaps—sometime—later—something might— . . ."

She sighed, shrugged, and dropped her eyes to the intricate pattern of the divan cover and picked at it with one slender, tapering finger.

Again he was before her; again he brushed a wet hand across a dripping forehead; again her ever-ready hand held him off.

"You madden me—madden me, Cora. I tell you that you should go to your husband, if you feel that way, and frankly tell him of your love for me—since you won't do anything else. He'd give you up if he had any decency about him—*any* man should give his wife up if he finds that she loves another and that he isn't strong enough to hold her love! . . . Do it—do it, Cora!"

Mrs. Sithers went on plucking at the design. Only her breast rose and fell once; only her big eyes, now brimming, were raised for the fraction of a second; only a slight shiver went through her closely robed, curve-accentuated form.

"Happiness," she hackneyed, "isn't for everyone!"

Nevertheless, it's surprising how it gets home—when the target is twenty-

one and wants to be an Arab chieftain on a moonlit plain, when any woman that half-way knows how reads Laurence Hope to him.

He came back to his main attack, wild-eyed and reaching:

"But it isn't right—it isn't right when you love me and I love you to have one man run both our lives! It isn't right and it isn't—"

But door bells have annihilated more fervid declarations than the *Evening Telegram* has Germans.

Gilbert stopped and frowned and swore quietly as Mrs. Sithers hastily yet gracefully quit the couch and went to answer the ring.

She was back in an instant, and when he looked up from the business of impatiently kicking the rug he blinked, frowned, and couldn't bring out his words.

In her hand was a yellow slip that told of a telegram; in her eyes was a glad, sparkling light he had not seen before; on her entire face was a certain joyous air that somehow—he didn't know why—made him wince and feel offended. She looked so different—so different from the languid woman who had read those things to him with such subtle feeling.

She spoke quickly—the soft tone he had loved gone from her voice—as she tripped by him almost without seeing him as she made for the mirror and started to pat down her hair:

"Quick, Gil. Get my hat from the

other room—the den. I left it on the table there when I came in. Quick—boy. George is passing through the city and will have just an hour between trains—quick, get my hat and call me a taxi. Heavens, dear boy, move. I—I haven't seen him in three whole months—think, three whole months!"

She deftly switched a hairpin, bit her lips to bring out more red, and hastily smoothed out her gown.

Gilbert hadn't moved. He gulped, gasped—and then hoarse words came: "Sithers—your husband! . . . You—you seem—I thought—you seem as if—if—"

Almost savagely, she turned on him. Her eyes were narrowed and her lips tautened and her voice very sharp:

"You—you fool! Will you ever grow up and understand that the love of the game is the thing—that we poor women who have to do without the husbands we love for nearly half the year must amuse ourselves as best we can to keep from going mad?" . . .

Again Gilbert gasped—and gulped. Dumbly, he watched her secure her hat, make for the 'phone, and call a taxi. The thing had come suddenly, crudely, straight from the shoulder—and it hurt like the very devil.

Finally he blinked, reddened, whitened and looked her squarely in the eyes and took his punishment honestly.

"Thanks," he said—and meant it, "I have grown up!"



AN historian is an unsuccessful novelist.



WIDOWER: one released on parole.

THE ROMANCE OF VERONICA DE PEYSTER

By Baron Ireland

VERONICA De Peyster was a maiden sweet and quaint;
Her face was one that Sargent would have dearly loved to paint,
Which Veronica De Peyster, that ingenuous young kid,
Fulfilling the potential wish of Mr. Sargent, did.

Veronica De Peyster had a simply perfect form
Designed upon the model of which Venus was the norm.
It could not be improved upon by artificial aids,
And so, of course, she tried them all, like other modern maids.

With the natural disadvantages Veronica possessed,
It would have been peculiar could she not have passed the test
Of beauty formulated by that paragon of men,
Varenes Antoine St. Cyr François Champs Elysées Qu'eauhenne.

Varenes Antoine etcetera, before he rose to fame
Had not inscribed precisely thus his terminating name;
Though a perspicacious person of an analytic trend,
By a simple change of accent, might deduce how it was penned.

But a *thé dansant* director for the lofty social set
In which, and in which only, Miss De Peyster could be met,
Must be careful, to be numbered with the strictly upper ten,
How he chirographically represents his cognomen.

Since this introduction's lengthy, I must cut my thread of song
To as short a length of shortness as its length's already long.
So I'll satisfy myself (and you) by leaving of the thread
But this: They met, they bowed, they danced, they loved, and they
were wed.

Need I relate how old De P. (a multi-millionaire)
Cursed, threatened, raved and would have torn his, had he had it, hair,
And swore to disinherit *her*—to kill *him* on the spot?
I needn't? Thank you, reader. As it happens, he did not.

For though De Peyster's income was a thousand bucks a day,
He knew it was but small compared with his who runs a *thé*.
And he knew the alimony would be fixed in figures ten
When it came to signing judgment in Qu'eauhenne against Qu'eauhenne.

A SAVAGE IN SILK

By Marguerite Buller Allan

THE first time I saw her she was sitting at a small tea table. As she lifted the china tea pot, with its decoration of blue and pink roses, and turned, smiling, towards her guest, holding out to him a tiny bell-shaped cup, I thought: How perfectly is she suited to the pose! A tea-table lady! Here was a little person the product of laborious civilization—a rose-tinted, restrained civilization.

Her features were small, finely cut. Her black hair was brushed straight off her forehead, and arranged in the high, pointed, exaggerated coiffure of the moment.

Her blue dress hid the outlines of her slim body. It concealed her in its stiff silken folds. Her voice was low and soft, and her tinkling laughter—a little bell striking the minutes.

I sought to discover her, I made inquiries concerning her. Mostly was there a scandalized concern for my interest in her. A woman like that—a little savage!

A savage? What did they mean? In what city was her home? They said she lived most of the year in the woods.

"Alone?" I asked.

They only shook their heads. They did not know. Evidently they were gravely suspicious.

I heard that a respectable party of tourists had once been driven from the locality of her house by the unexpected vision of a young woman running naked through the woods to the lake.

"But," I said, "she appeared quiet and decorous the other day when I saw her having tea. The life here has tamed her, then?"

"If you had looked closely you would

have seen the forest madness in her eyes," they said.

"There is too little of that in all you city-sobered ones," I retorted and left them.

As I was staying at the same hotel, I had opportunities to watch her, and I did so with absorbed interest. Surely these people were mistaken about her. The soul cannot hide itself so completely. Sooner or later it declares itself: "This is what I am—here is the truth."

Once I saw her turn her head to look after a woman she hated, and although she thought herself unobserved I caught the look. It was that of a savage stalking his prey. It gave me the first glimmer of the truth of her.

One afternoon I was walking in the gardens, when I heard a snarling and yelping as of some creature in distress. I hastened in the direction of the sound. The yelping continued, but fainter now. Suddenly it ceased altogether. I turned a corner and discovered a woman rising from her knees. It was She. Upon the grass at her feet lay the pitiful form of a mangy-looking little cur.

"What have you done?" I cried.

"I killed it," she replied. "It tried to bite me, so I choked it. . . . Have you ever felt a beast die under your hand?" she asked.

She stood panting, excited, before me. It was repulsive. . . .

I followed her silently back to the hotel, she stepping daintily in high-heeled slippers.

Her fascination was the lure of the incongruous.

She seemed a positive demon of cruelty. Wantonly she would kill any

small insect. When one of her admirers caught a white butterfly for her, I turned aside not to see her mutilate it.

Once I heard her say:

"I am choking here—I am going to the woods—"

I had a vision of her slim white body swaying under the trees. What would her cave be like? What man amongst us would she select for her mate? I half hoped it might be myself.

"I'd tame her fast enough," I thought, "the little savage!"

And the ancient primitive hate be-

tween the sexes stirred within me. . . . Had I not been angry with her then? Did I not catch her wrists fiercely one night when the fire burned low? Surely she wept. . . . Her long hair hid her face as she cowered in the shadows . . . and what creature in the primeval night outside howled at the moon? . . .

I started violently—she bent towards me:

"I have asked you three times," she said, "to get my fan for me. It's stifling here, isn't it?"

She smiled—and her teeth, her little, sharp, white, animal teeth, showed as she smiled at me.



I HAVE HAD THE NIGHT

By Witter Bynner

DEW is on the roofs
And dawn is opening behind St. Patrick's.

I have had the Night in partnership
Contemplating together, over great distances,
Fuller news than presses are preparing.
And the Night and I leaned closely together, lest we should see the
dawn too soon.

But now the shine of dew is on the roofs and the purple line behind
the spires,
Foretelling a rattle of light
That shall bring upon the city commerce and complications . . .
And the Night turns away.

Late to-morrow I shall meet again
The Night: truest of all my lovers
And, beyond them all, steadfast
And always waiting!



LE BON FANTÔME

By Jacques Nayral

BERNARD, le marin, venait d'achever le récit d'une histoire de revenants, d'une de ces histoires bretonnes mystérieuses et profondes comme l'appel hurlant des flots, sous la lune, au long des granits.

Les femmes frissonnaient; elles avaient des rires nerveux et brefs, par quoi se décelait l'étrange volupté de la peur imaginaire. Mais, supérieurement narquois, les hommes tâchaient à se parer d'un indulgent scepticisme.

M. Gustave Le Hidoin ne riait pas. Il demanda :

— Vous ne croyez pas aux fantômes ?

La gravité de son accent nous stupéfia d'abord : il y croyait donc, lui ? Quoi, ce petit quinquagénaire mafflu, ventru, dodu, si outrageusement matériel qu'on pouvait, à son aspect, douter qu'il possédât une âme pensante, aurait eu des visions d'au-delà ? Cet organisme replet aurait communiqué avec des esprits ? Une telle supposition parut à tous si bouffonne que les femmes s'arrêtèrent de frissonner, les hommes de railler, et qu'un éclat de rire général réveilla les vitres endormies du salon.

Le placide M. Le Hidoin n'en fut point troublé. Avec une pesante autorité, qui peu à peu imposait le silence, il conta :

— Voici deux ans, l'été me fut cruel. Ah ! il n'était pas question, alors, de bains de mer, ni de casinos, ni de baccara, pour votre déplorable serviteur. Tandis que vous fatiguiez sans relâche vos désœuvrements à travers le brouhaha des plages cosmopolites, ne songeant plus à moi que si je n'avais jamais existé. . . .

— Par exemple ! Le Hidoin ! Quelle calomnie ! . . .

— Mais je ne vous le reproche pas. C'est trop naturel. Je ferais de même. A ce moment béni de l'année, dis-je, je défendais péniblement ma pitoyable carcasse contre les attaques d'une grippe. Une grippe, mon Dieu oui, une simple grippe. Mais les gripes d'été, comme l'amour des femmes de quarante ans, sont, au dire des experts, singulièrement redoutables.

— Ah ! mais, permettez ! Le Hidoin ! Vous êtes d'une insolence !

— Allons, allons, du calme ! Ceci n'atteint personne. Y a-t-il parmi nous une femme ayant la quarantaine ? Non, n'est-ce pas ? Vous voyez bien. Et puis, qu'on ne m'interrompe plus, ou nous n'en finirons jamais. Donc, je gémissais — expression consacrée — sur un lit de douleurs, dans le petit pavillon d'Auteuil où j'abrite, depuis des ans, mon enviable célibat. Enviable, certes, il l'était, même dans ces affreuses conjonctures : n'avais-je pas, pour veiller sur mes jours, l'incomparable Euphrasie, perle des femmes de charge, qui composait à elle seule tout mon personnel domestique — et quel personnel ! Excellente Euphrasie ! Je l'avais couchée sur mon testament, pour cent mille francs tout ronds, histoire, en cas de malheur — de malheur pour moi, s'entend — qu'elle fût assurée d'une paisible vieillesse. Elle le savait et me vénérât à l'égal du bon Dieu. Je la vois toujours, le soir du 20 juillet, et son émoi, son affolement, quand le médecin, me croyant endormi, lui disait : "Faites bien attention. Il peut parfaitement mourir d'ici douze heures. Ne pleurez pas et écoutez-moi. A minuit, entendez bien, vous lui donnerez la potion que voici. Rien d'autre à faire, mais n'oubliez pas, c'est la seule

chance qui nous reste." Chose bizarre, mais qu'expliquait ma dépression morale et physique, j'entendais, sans en être touché, les inquiétants commentaires du médecin et les sanglots de mon angélique femme de charge. Aussi indifférent que si tout cela se fût rapporté à un inconnu, je m'assoupis dans une quasi-béatitude.

Un bruit léger m'éveilla en pleine nuit. La veilleuse palpitait faiblement dans la chambre. Elle était l'image même de ma conscience, laquelle n'éclairait de sa vacillante lueur qu'une vague souvenance et des notions embryonnaires: "Euphrasie, La potion. Minuit. La seule chance." Je les exprimais à voix aussi haute que le permettait mon état, quand il me sembla qu'une ombre avait passé devant mon lit et s'était arrêtée net. Je répétais: "Euphrasie. Minuit. La potion." L'ombre avait disparu.

De la pièce voisine, un fantôme surgit; il s'avança, correctement vêtu du linceul traditionnel. Et cela ne me parut pas extraordinaire, tant il est vrai que j'avais un pied déjà dans le royaume des ombres. Insoucieux de l'énigme, je dis, rassemblant mes forces: "Est-il minuit?" "Il est minuit," affirma le fantôme. Il dut m'examiner, à la lueur de la veilleuse, car il fit cette réflexion: "Ah! le pauvre bougre!" Cette marque de pitié m'inspira confiance, et je dis encore: "Euphrasie? La potion?" "Il n'y a pas d'Euphrasie," répondit le fantôme. Cette bonne Euphrasie! croyez-vous! Elle m'aimait trop pour, étant présente, ne pas me prodiguer ses soins attentifs, mais pas assez pour sacrifier ainsi la seule chance — "la seule chance" — qu'elle eût d'hériter tout de suite. Elle avait donc, en conscience, découché, et je ne l'ai jamais revue.

Mais revenons au fantôme. Il paraissait avoir tout deviné, tout compris,

car il saisit la fiole laissée par le docteur, déchiffra l'instruction griffonnée sur l'étiquette, et m'ayant doucement soulevé la tête, m'administra la potion libératrice. Elle me ranima une seconde, assez pour me permettre enfin quelque étonnement. "Mais, mais, dis-je au fantôme, qui donc êtes-vous?" "Je suis, répondit-il d'une voix classiquement caverneuse, le Bon Fantôme envoyé par le ciel pour suppléer les domestiques infidèles." Déjà la potion opérait en sens inverse. Je me rendormis profondément. J'étais sauvé, et c'est tout."

M. Gustave Le Hidoïn se tut. Ayant croisé ses mains sur sa ronde bedaine, il faisait tourner ses pouces avec satisfaction.

Mais personne n'était content. Une dame résuma l'opinion générale;

— Ca ne finit pas, votre histoire. Qu'est-ce que c'était que ce fantôme?

— Eh, je ne sais pas, moi. Il m'a sauvé la vie, et c'est déjà bien joli.

— Oui, mais il faudrait autre chose, des traces, des preuves. Dites donc tout bonnement que vous avez eu une hallucination.

— Pour cela, non. La preuve, c'est que le Bon Fantôme a laissé de son passage des marques irrécusables.

— Oh! oh! Lesquelles.

— Voici: il a emporté dix mille francs et laissé une pince-monseigneur.

Alors, pour la deuxième fois, un rire général éclata, dont s'égayèrent jusqu'aux cristaux du lustre, tandis que la dame curieuse s'écriait:

— Un cambrieoleur! C'était un bon cambrieoleur!

Mais M. Le Hidoïn reprit sévèrement:

— Fi donc, belle madame! Un peu de poésie, s'il vous plaît! Voilà que vous parlez comme un commissaire de police.



THE COMMERCIAL THEATRICAL MISMANAGER

By George Jean Nathan

THE exhibits displayed recently upon the illuminated steppes of the Broadway theaters are to the Corinthian profoundly less interesting as specimens of drama than as specimens of the ratiocination and cerebral jigs of the Broadway producer. It is, of course, the mode current to blame the theatrical manager for almost everything, just as it is the mode to trim women's transparent crêpe-chiffon sleeves with fur, to call cinema views of the Italian army war pictures and to indulge in kindred contrary heresies. In point of fact, much of this blame is without reason. The average commercial theatrical manager is, from many points of view, a laudable fellow. Said what there be to the contrary, he generally produces the best plays he can lay hands on; he is lavish in the equipment which he affords his presentations; he builds comfortable museums in which to house his exhibitions. The one thing he may logically be blamed for, this commercial theatrical manager, is that, whatever his artistic aims and artistic accomplishments, whatever his brave and praiseworthy efforts to do the best there is in him, he is usually a perfectly rotten business man.

That, very simply, is the actual trouble with the average Boxoffski. The courts of bankruptcy to this offer up ample testimony. So, by way of prognostication, do the presently frequent Monday *premières* and Saturday *dernières* of plays which, though otherwise amply boshful, still so clearly miss the necessary flubdubberies for box-office success that one would imagine the

deficiencies were apparent even to a blind man. Take, for clinic, a melodrama, "The Ware Case," lodged several weeks gone upon the incandescent prairie of the Maxine Elliott Theater. Learning that the show, originally produced in London, contained what they were happy to regard as an element of commercial novelty—to wit, a trial scene wherein the audience was enlisted to serve as the jury before which the case was being tried—a posse of native drama-drummers besieged the cable offices and sizzled dumfounding offers overseas, one against the other, for the American rights to the masque. And eventually the glowing victor, trembling with visions of golden reward, set out the piece upon the shelf named and, obviously enough, beheld the article score a shining failure.

If the commercial gentleman who produced and endeavoured to sell "The Ware Case" to an American audience were to gaze into the crystal of an Avenue cigar shop and see a window full of cigars tied individually in pink ribbons with a lithograph of Mr. Bert Williams adorning each, he would doubtless observe to himself that the manager of the tobacco bazaar, if he believed thus to sell his cigars, was by way of being something of a jackass. Yet the cigar fellow, gazing upon the manager's melodrama, would unquestionably be seized with a like reflection. Consider. The manager realized that the melodrama in point, being a usual melodrama in every respect, would have to offer as its selling quality but one thing—and that, the pseudo-novelty al-

ready alluded to, the novelty, to wit, of the audience being asked to serve during the trial scene as a jury. Now, as is perfectly well known, it is the chief aim, ambition and dream of nine out of every ten American citizens, whatever their race, color or previous condition of matrimony, by hook or crook, by fair means or foul, to avoid jury duty. The American who is eager to serve upon a jury—or who even views such a service without dismay and alarm—is as exotic a creature as one might expect to encounter on the day's march. Picture then by what process of mental Twilight Sleep the producer gave birth to the theory that a body of gentlemen, seeking pleasure in a theater, would welcome such a service, albeit imaginary, as a source of pastime and amusement.

Upon the beamy pampas of the Gaiety Theater, a like instance of commercial managerial obliquity of computation has been vouchsafed the cognoscenti. The pampas of this particular playhouse was lately made the scene of enactment of Mr. Avery Hopwood's newest farce, "Sadie Love," a dramatization, after a fashion, of the author's novel, "A Full Honeymoon," which it was Mencken's and my pleasure, as editors of this magazine, first to bestow upon the elect. To anyone with half an eye, it was evident (as I observed here a month ago) that were the materials of the novel transplanted with little alteration to the spotlight pasture and were the cast selected with reasonable sagacity, the success of the resulting play would be an eminently safe hazard. The farce, in a word, seemed in the offing to be possessed securely not only of genuine intrinsic merit, humor and smartness, but also of all the qualities, such for example as naughtiness, a cunning "sympathetic" heroine, a physis of slapstick and the like, necessary to insure its appeal to the yokels of the box-office line. This, then, was the commercial manager's potential property. But what now?

The commercial manager, one Morosco, being, like most persons who consecrate their lives to art, a bad business

man, forthwith persuaded himself to believe that the buying public would be offended if the virgin flapper of Mr. Hopwood's novel were made the heroine, as well, of Mr. Hopwood's farce; that the buyers would question the taste of a young girl maneuvering the risqué Hopwood situations. And so the author permitted himself to be tempted—and the vestal flapper became duly metamorphosed into a widow. And a success coincidentally became metamorphosed into a failure. Or, at least, what must be admitted a comparative failure.

Every commercial manager in the land, including Mr. Morosco, has known from boyhood the ancient theatrical stratagem of making an audience laugh by placing naughty lines in the mouth of an ingénue who is supposed to be innocently unaware of their import. Yet this Morosco, seeking to tone down the tartness of the Hopwood line and situation, deliberately took a course opposite to that established from time immemorial by the box-office mariners and so obtained a result directly the reverse of that which he sought. With the casting lesson of one farce success after another literally staring him in the face and with the correlated knowledge that such risqué farces as "Baby Mine," "Twin Beds," Mr. Hopwood's own "Fair and Warmer" and so on are best to be sold to an audience with a youthful and guileless-looking little sweetie in the leading role, Mr. Morosco then went a step further and cast the widow with a one-hundred-and-fifty pounder who, whatever her other merits, still had ceased to believe in Santa Claus at least twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago. Of course, against these Liverpools, Mr. Hopwood, however good his farce might otherwise be, could ride but vainly. A playwright's lines must ever fight against the physical personality of the actor reciting them. Flapper dialogue coming from the lips of a grown woman with feet firmly upon the ground becomes not merely unconvincing but entirely silly. The laugh so disappears

from the dialogue and its place becomes usurped by unruly speculations as to whether the lady rolls to reduce. A big woman cannot be risqué and funny at the same time. The court of Madame De Stäel reflected, winked, quoted—but it didn't guffaw. Imagine Bertha Kalish in "Baby Mine," Ethel Barrymore in "Twin Beds," Sarah Bernhardt in "The Habit of a Lackey"—Marjorie Rambeau in "Sadie Love"!

Thus do our commercial managers lose their money. Thus do they put on Rostand's "La Princesse Lointaine," enchant the audience for the entire first act with dithyramb and lute proclaiming the exquisite and amazing beauty of the leading lady and then hoist the second act curtain on Madame Simone. Thus does Mrs. Fiske permit herself to come out upon the bulb-bordered moor in "The High Road" as a minx of eighteen summers. Thus are young leading men called upon to fight duels for Miss Beulah Battleaxe. Thus, in plays adapted from the French, does the heroine beget a baby merely because the villain has kissed her. Thus is a severe and sober Englishman cast for the role of Max in "Anatol." Thus do they make a "dress suit" play out of "The Fable of the Wolf" ("The Phantom Rival") and so delete the composition of its two most profitable ingredients. Thus is Emily Stevens divulged as a mermaid. Thus does William Gillette shoot his brother and go to Libby Prison for Miss Helen Freeman. And thus do they mistake such a play as "Moloch" to be, like the work of Joseph Conrad, powerful by virtue of its thematic meaningfulness, when in reality it is merely empty.

A rubber-stamp addle argument used by some of the daily gazetteers to account the successfulness of Mr. Hopwood's play had to do with the circumstance that the playwright had named his product a romantic farce, that it was just that, and that whereas Hopwood had thus mixed his dramatic elements (romance and farce, to wit) he was by the rules of the theater doomed to frustration. What juicy slices of

piffle-pie are such pseudo-critical feats! The notion—it is persistent—that a dramatist cannot succeed in mixing in a single theatrical composition the different dramatic elements is as bovine as it is popular. Shakespeare is full of such mixtures. For example, the romantic farce called "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." For example, the romantic farce called "Love's Labor Lost." It was of such mixtures, indeed, that Johnson found justification in that in real life the vulgar is found close to the sublime, that the merry and the sad usually accompany and succeed one another. The modern German play—take Hermann Essig or Rittner, for instance—is frequently as mixed of mood as a bachelor with several *Cointreaux* aboard. From the "Orestes" of Euripides, with its catastrophe more suitable to comedy than tragedy, to George Cohan's "Seven Keys to Baldpate," the records of success are adorned with the matrimony of diverse elements. What, at bottom, *par parenthèse*, is Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra" but romantic farce?

The conceit that the theater-going public is to be amused only after a strict technique is, in faith, a sweet tootsie-wootsie. The familiar perfectly human and highly agreeable impulse to laugh at a funeral should imply that it is an equally reasonable and agreeable impulse to be a bit sad, now and again, at a farce. Why should there not be sentiment in farce, as there is in Hopwood's? Who, Mons. Critic, passed a law against it? Probably the same rakish fellow who censured the late Charles K. Hoyt for playing with cheap relish on his characters' names—Welland Strong, Jack Aspin, Goodrich Mudd, et al.—when the same relish is visible in Homer, the Books of Moses (chock full of it) Petrarch, Cicero, Shakespeare, Farquhar, Sheridan . . .

The critics, instead of courting progress and infusing new life into the bones of the drama, are forever yelping "you can't do this," "you can't do that," and are so constantly doing their little, if ineffectual best, to keep the theater

in statu quo. The critics said that drama was not a form of literature for the weavings of consistent naturalism, that "it couldn't be done"—and along came Arno Holz and Hauptmann and they did it. The critics said a play to succeed had to have heart interest, as they termed it; that "it couldn't get over without love"—and along came Shaw. The critics said a play had, to interest a modern mixed audience, be well-knit and closely consecutive—and along came the fragmentary Arnold Bennett and even scrappier Tristan Bernard. The critics said you could no longer successfully fool your audience—and along toddled Leblanc, Cohan and Megrue in the wake of Baring, Davis, et al. The critics said that if you played a joke on your audience at the final curtain, the audience's disappointment at that juncture would not be atoned for by its previous pleasure—and along came Sidney Grundy with his "Arabian Nights" (still running in stock under various titles and still the amateur's favorite) and Thaddäus Rittner with his "Unterwegs" that set shaking the Little Marys of Vienna and Berlin. The critics said a play could not contradict itself and along came Wedekind with "Der Stein der Weisen." The critics said a lot about the unity of time and along came a youngster with his "On Trial." The critics were of the opinion that an operetta must have music and along came Ludwig Bauer with his "The King Trust." They said you couldn't write a successful play without women—and along came Schnitzler with "Professor Bernhardt," which has made money where it has been presented. They said that different characters had to speak as idiomatic individuals and should not be made to serve as a mere grouped mouthpiece for the author—and along came Wilde. And they who are now venerable (and respected) grandpas gave the first spoof-giggle to Ibsen.

The theory that a wooden platform lit up by electricity and hung with strips of painted canvas and cheesecloth may respond only to a fixed and

invariable set of rules is akin to the theory that a highly proficient actress with fat legs may be convincing in a romantic role. The truth of the matter being simply that a playwright may successfully do almost anything he chooses to do, provided only he has the necessary imagination and inventive skill for the doing. The critics confound themselves. When they see a new and novel form fail, they imagine it is the form that has failed when, in reality, it is merely the playwright.

If the drama is to hold the mirror up to nature, then let the mirror do some reflecting. To object to the presence of a sentimental love scene in a farce, as has been the objection in the case of "Sadie Love," and simultaneously to argue that "Sadie Love's" weakness lies in its lack of plausibility and remoteness from reality, is to argue that life is but one long and uninterrupted ha-ha. This critical business is becoming steadily more and more grotesque. Small wonder so many of the better critics have given up their art in disgust and resigned themselves to become playwrights.

The yappishness of the average municipal professional dramatic umpire is no more gayly to be sensed than in his attitude toward what he calls vulgarity. To such an important old dear, anything is to be scowled at as vulgar that might joggle the affectibilities or jounce the suspended animation of the nice old maids in the Serbian Stomachband Sewing Circle back in the old home town in Minnesota. With ear alert and shooter at his lip trembling to discharge its devastating pea, he awaits, like cat the mouse, the first suspicion upon the fair and untarnished American stage of any word, act or line that might possibly corrupt the morals of little Henrietta Swinkbauer back in Fishville Springs. And when his eager blue sniffer detects a vagrant whiff of something that seems to him not strictly *au fait*, not quite to the esthetic and ethical taste for which Fishville Springs or Oswald Falls or whatever it is, is famous, he puts him on his overcoat and hurries

him right down to the office to write a little piece. And the next morning he reads his little piece and becomes profoundly impressed with himself as "a champion of clean plays"—which is to say, the school of boob who believes that it is better to corrupt the art of drama with such spotless pish as "Experience" than it is to corrupt with blushes the jaundiced cheeks of some spinster numskulls in Finkport with a play like "The Song of Songs." When one stops to consider that the young men and women who are admittedly among the most talented of our younger (or for that matter, older) essayists for the American illumined savanna—such writers, for example, as Edward Sheldon, Knoblauch, Zoe Akins, this same Hopwood, et cetera—have one and all been denounced for this vulgarity by these holy sons of slobber, these pure yokels; when one stops to consider that such in many respects excellent plays as "Papa," "The Song of Songs," "The Faun"—to say nothing of "The Easiest Way," "Baby Mine," and the like—have suffered in the metropolis the sting of the provincial bean, one will appreciate the sympathy that is due the American who wishes to write something other than Elsie stories for the native stage.

Vulgarity is in itself an art, though it is difficult so to persuade the average citizen of the Democracy. Being himself inherently vulgar, the American has small respect for vulgarity. He has come by it so naturally, so spontaneously, that he forgets the perfected quality of his vulgarity is the result not of the moment nor yet of the year, but of some one hundred years of the most assiduous cultivation on the part of his forebears. Familiarity with vulgarity has bred the American's contempt for it. And so, being himself something of a genius in vulgarity, he quite naturally fails to appreciate the quality when it is made brilliantly visible in art forms. Thus Shaw's creamy study in vulgarity, "Great Catherine," would, were it locally presented, be certain to fail of this fellow's approbation. So,

too, would Freksa's "The Fat Caesar." So, too, Holm's "Mary's Big Heart." So, too, Schnitzler's "Reigen," the hilarious French farce "The Rubicon" and a score of others like it, Wedekind's "Earth Spirit," "Box of Pandora," "Mine-Haha" and "In Full Cry," the currently deleted portions of Shakespeare, Evrinnoff's "Theater of the Soul," much of Lothar Schmidt, the Metropo's "Men from Maxim's" revue, the "Amoureuse" of Porto Riche, Lavedan's "Gout du Vice," the Renaissance's success "L'Aphrodite," Hauptmann's "Before Dawn," nine-tenths of the gay little Guignol comedies . . .

The American bumpkin who at home eats ice-cream with a spoon, has a sepia photograph of the President hanging on the wall of what he terms his "sitting-room," calls the maid familiarly by her first name, keeps several Coronas around for strictly company purposes and is fertile in similar vulgarities, immediately he enters a theater constitutes of himself an authority on refinement. Once in the playhouse, he is a beau of precise taste, a howling swell in finesse. Full of superior bahs and poohs, he. Does a lady character in the play swig a cocktail and say a "hell," shakes he his head on the *malavisé* mien of the episode. Does a lady character don a lacy nightie, tightens he his lips in firm disapproval. He is one little bunch of *au faits, savoir vivre, comme il faut, à la modes, bon goûts, somme guys*, all compact. This, the fellow the writer for the American platform is called upon to please. This our referee of vulgarity. Hopwood's "Sadie Love" is a badly spoiled job, true; but the person who says that it is unnecessarily and inappropriately vulgar therein confesses that he is the sort of clown who would criticize Rabelais after the same standards that he would criticize "Peg o' My Heart."

To revert momentarily to "The Ware Case." I need add little to what I have already signalled. Properly to appreciate its utter banality, turn to a play by Lothar Schmidt (in collabora-

tion with Heinrich Ilgenstein) called "Fiat Justitia." Therein will you see what someone else has done with a similar theme. The role of the villain in the Pleydell plum was given to Mr. Lou-Tellegen, who was equally bad both in and out of the manuscript.

The chancellors of the miniature Punch and Judy Theater have wrought wisely in abandoning light comedy for the time being and giving over the thirsty pulpit of their masque mosque to melodrama. For, contrary to the so prevalent hocus-pocus, melodrama may achieve its best effect not in large playhouses like the Drury Lane or the Manhattan Opera House, but in very small ones like the Bandbox, the Little Theater and this very Punch and Judy. Properly and with conviction to exercise its power over a theater audience, melodrama should be so produced that it at no time impresses its spectators as anything other than a hollow compound of noise and pasteboard. That is, melodrama in the generally accepted meaning of the word. Any suspicion of realism forthwith deletes that particular portion of the melodrama of persuasion and credibility. Max Maurey, director of the Grand Guignol, is doubtless the most consistently proficient and successful producer of melodrama in the world and he produces his melodramas (even such as "S. O. S.," "Toward the Light," "The Submarine" and others which require comparatively elaborate scenic devices and trickeries) in a theater not so large as even the Punch and Judy.

The explanation of the theory is simple. The producer who presents his melodrama in a big theater does so under the impression that the further an audience is removed from the stage trappings and traffic the less flawed and more real these trappings and traffic will seem to it. And the producer is, in this, correct; but, being correct, he yet bamboozles himself. For his audience is thus placed in the in this instance theatrically less desirable mood of imagining and believing in the realism of the proceedings than in the more

prosperous mood of detecting, from a closer look, the holes in the ocean waves and the shirt-sleeved and perspiring O'Brien pushing the 18,000-ton papier-maché battleship across the back-drop and so being made safely appreciative of the entire artificiality of the drama it is beholding. That the stuff of melodrama is purely artificial, an audience must be made constantly to feel. Just as an audience will laugh heartily at the spectacle of Fields poking his finger in Weber's eye so long as it knows Weber's eye isn't being hurt and just as the same audience would, as Fields himself has observed, stop laughing immediately if it believed the pain were actual, so will an audience be pleasurably thrilled by a melodrama just so long as it feels the whole thing is merely a show, and so will the audience cease to be pleasurably thrilled and become lost to the producer the moment it feels a too great sense of illusion and reality in the proceedings. Certainly, most successful melodramas have owed their prosperity to their clearly and patent artificiality. The audience naturally knew that the thrilling time-clock infernal machine of "The Fatal Card" could not possibly be loaded and go off on the stage because, if it were and did, it would blow up the first half dozen rows of audience with it. The audience naturally knew that the great cannon of "The Cherry Pickers" couldn't possibly go off while the hero was strapped to its mouth, because, if it did, it would spatter the hero all over the ladies' dresses out front. Maurey lets you see closely the trap-door covered with brown cloth representing a pit of quicksand, the obvious waxness of the hand under which the villain holds the lighted candle. And Maurey's task is admittedly a simpler one than were he a caterer to the pink sensibilities of Americans.

The two prime requisites of a successful melodrama are, therefore, (1) that it shall lack complete conviction and (2) that it shall make its audience feel itself *protem*. in the place of the melodrama's producer. The ingenuity

of a melodrama's production is of infinitely more interest to an audience than the melodrama itself. Else why the lure of the mechanical "big scene"? Was it the story or plausibility of "The Whip" that interested audiences or was it the toy trickery of the moving train? Did not Lincoln Carter make all his money out of mechanical automobile races and stereopticon forest fires? Is it the plot of "The Sporting Duchess" or is it the horse race that is remembered? Is it "The White Heather" or the balloon? "The Span of Life" or the three acrobats who formed the human bridge?

This being the case, why should not melodrama be more successful in a small theater wherein an audience is made privy to its tricks? Is Ching Ling Foo less amusing than Kellar because he shows you how the tricks are done? A melodrama audience is an audience in a youngster frame of mind. It wants to see what's inside the doll. As its particular melodrama, the Punch and Judy has selected a dramatization by Mr. Jules Eckert Goodman of "Treasure Island." The first two acts are very well handled indeed, though the balance of the piece is inclined to stutter. The spectacle of the good cardboard ship *Hispaniola* adrift on the cheesecloth and the blank cartridge battle in the canvas stockade are among the evening's pretty excitements.

Just as melodrama is to be best viewed in a small show-bourse, so is a play by Shaw best critically to be viewed in a large one. For, whereas every man who doesn't wear colored socks is already thoroughly familiar with Shaw's plays and therefore sees no reason why he should go to the theater and be misled into imagining from garbled interpretations that they aren't so good as he knows they are, it follows that the real sport of an acted Shaw play is not the play, but the audience of more or less gaping and startled yahoos in attendance thereupon. And, obviously, the larger the audience the greater the sport. A Shaw audience, in New York at least, is a lovely berry.

To go slumming amongst such a droll people, to give surreptitious ear to its deductions and corollaries, is a *brochette* of treats. And such a *brochette* was again and lately provided in the presentation, upon the lighted gibbosity at the Playhouse, of "Major Barbara."

Inasmuch as Shaw wrote this piece some ten years ago and inasmuch as it deals, as you know, with the question of war munitions and the ethics appertaining thereto, the audience in attendance upon the induction was audible in its astonishment over Shaw's remarkable prevision, over his anticipation, as it were, of current conditions and events. There was or is, of course, no prevision whatever—but rather post-vision; for Shaw conditioned his remarks on the controversies that had grown out of the British troubles in South Africa.

A second treat was to be enjoyed in the usual Shaw audience's usual whiffing over the imperfections and minus marks of the Shaw dramatic technique. It is a peculiarity of Shaw's theatrical audiences that when they are confessedly most engrossed by his plays they are coincidentally most emphatic in their argument that his technique is faulty. Thus, though the good folk are ten times more interested in and entertained by a Shaw play with its lack of what they call technique than they are interested in and entertained by a Horace Annesley Vachell play with its gallons of technique, they are still obediently convinced that Shaw's technique, because it doesn't follow certain more or less occult rules, is the less proper and efficient of the two. Will this *suprême* of technique walla-walla never be done with? As Mencken has nicely observed "The drama is a facile and easy art form (despite all the gabble about 'technique' that one hears from jitney dramatists who couldn't write a decent triolet to save their hides), and so it is natural that it should occasionally appeal to great artists, particularly in their moments of fatigue and indolence." If dramatic technique is, forsooth, the difficult thing some profess-

ors would have us believe, why is it that so many numskulls succeed at it? Why are many of the plays technically perfect the product of writers without a single idea, a trace of imagination, an ounce of character sense or a whit of fancy? Why, in another direction, is it then that so many beginners achieve it with apparently astonishing ease and auspiciousness the very first time they tackle it? Jean Webster, a writer of magazine stories for young girls, did "Daddy Longlegs" at her first try. Catherine Chisholm Cushing followed up her "Real Thing" with "Kitty MacKay" and "Jerry." Thompson Buchanan dropped newspaper work and wrote the adroit and equally successful "Woman's Way." A. E. Thomas left the *Sun* and turned out the deft "Her Husband's Wife." Young Reizenstein left a lawyer's office and delivered "On Trial." Marcin quit the *Press* and negotiated "The House of Glass." Robert McLoughlin was a stock company manager and turned out "The Eternal Magdalene." The list is without end. Whatever the plays therein may not be from a critical point of view, they are full of the "technique" beloved of the whiskered classes. Charles K. Hoyt was a press-agent. His first bout with Technique was eminently successful. So was James Forbes', also a press-agent. Henry Arthur Jones was a traveling salesman. He quit telling naughty stories in the smoking-car and achieved Technique at the first crack. Charles Rann Kennedy was an actor and his first try at Technique was "The Servant in the House." Thus the situation! And Shaw, Wedekind, Andreyev, Synge, Dunsany, Tchekoff, et al., still have the pesky old thing to master!

Treat *le troisième*. The notion favorite always of Shaw's audience of

critics, that Shaw's plays are deficient in the visualizing of this or that episode, in permitting an audience to see this or that thing rather—as is the case—than having the characters merely talk about its being, or having been, done. Bang! There, by the same hook, go Schiller's "Maid of Orleans," Mr. Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and eight out of ten of the world's best plays. To visualize everything in a play is to compose merely a cheap melodrama. The drama of ideas is the drama of the ear. The eye is the little brother of Kiralfy and Belasco. Sardou, the Charles M. Schwab of cheap melodrama, craftily and not unsuccessfully sought to give a loftier tone to his compositions and so assure himself of some literary standing by inventing the action of his plays and—as Shaw himself has expressed it—then carefully keeping it out of sight in the wings and having it announced by letters and telegrams.

"Major Barbara," as already amply appreciated, is a mixture of Nietzsche and "The Belle of New York," done after the formula of Aristophanes, Beaumarchais and Will Cressy, and, while one of the least important of Shaw's satiric compositions, is still better than the most important of any American dramatist I can summon to mind. The play's enactment by the Playhouse repertory company is a valuable argument against the cherished theory that a permanent group of modern actors may possess a sufficient flexibility to interpret with skill such diverse molds of drama as a repertory company is called upon to present. But the spirit of Miss George's venture, though its execution periodically and with reasonable inevitableness must fail, is excellent.



A MASSACRE IN A MAUSOLEUM

By H. L. Mencken

AFTER all, what is reform but a laborious demonstration that $2 + 2 = 4$? The true reformer, indeed, is no more than a donkeyish prattler of what should go without saying; the wildest heretic, at bottom, is merely a platitudinarian who has managed to make the obvious bear the agreeable aspect of the scandalous. So plain is this fact that we have put it into a saying: the heresy of to-day is the platitude of tomorrow. A platitude about a platitude! And, as usual with platitudes, a sick and decrepit one. The truth is, of course, that there is actually an unmistakable difference in intrinsic veracity between the heresy of to-day and the platitude of to-morrow, for the latter is necessarily less true than the former, else the great majority of God-fearing men would not believe it. Thus it was quite true that Mother Church was a very dubious old baggage at the time the late Martin Luther stated it as a heresy, but it is no longer true to-day, with at least forty million patriotic Americans believing it. And by the same token it is true today that the two Houses of Congress are hypocritical, venal and dishonest but it will not be true after all the uplifters and bogus messiahs are orgiastically kicked out and the common people are thus made to believe it, nor was it true ten or twelve years ago, in the palmy days of the Interests, when no pop-eyed *vilain* of the newspapers had the slightest doubt of it.

Here, discoursing upon platitudes, I platitudinize with the utmost ferocity—almost, indeed, like a Methodist bishop or a gentleman about to be hanged. Let my excuse be the fact

that my intentions are humane—that what I chiefly seek to do is to obtain a merciful verdict upon Dr. Albert Mordell, the Philadelphia Georg Brandes, whose latest tome, "DANTE AND OTHER WANING CLASSICS," might otherwise excite the sensitive to lamentable cursing and swearing, or even to assault, mayhem and homicide. I grant you freely, gents, that it is hard to read this work and not go on the bust. When one encounters in it (page 12) an argument against Dante's "Divina Commedia" on the ground that some of the ladies and gentlemen pictured as in Hell therein "are punished in a measure out of proportion to their faults" and "should not have been put in Hell at all"; when one finds "Paradise Lost" denounced (page 54) because Eve's sudden acquirement of knowledge, on eating of the apple, is "not . . . a transformation that we have ever experienced," since "our knowledge is a matter of gradual growth and we have not been placed in a condition wherein from almost total insensibility we sprang instantly into the possession of great intellect"; when we are solemnly told (page 95) that the Confessions of St. Augustine are "distinctly old-fashioned Christian literature" and that "one thing that makes the Confessions tedious is that the book is addressed directly to God, and not to the reader"; when the author warns us (page 70) that Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" is full of archaic theology and demonology, that "when we find Christian engaged in the struggle with Appolyon, who is covered with scales, wings and is belching fire and smoke, we say to ourselves: 'Now we have never fought this monster. He

is the same old dragon who is a constant figure in medieval literature"—when, as I say, we wade through page after page and chapter after chapter of such naïf flapdoodle, of such high school platitudes, of such empty and obvious guff, the temptation is strong to run shrieking into the street and stuff the book down the gullet of the nearest sergeant of police. But second thoughts stay us. Second thoughts cure this damnable itch and pestilence of platitudes with still another platitude—to wit, with the platitude that, after all, such things must be said, somehow they must be put into words, someone must embalm them in a book. They may seem sour, stale, infinitely flat and brackish, but are college professors yet hep to them, are they known in Philadelphia, Raleigh, N. C., and Cambridge, Mass., have they reached (as sweet music) the ears of the poor schoolboys who are still doomed to sweat through "Paradise Lost" and the poems of Cowper, and to learn to "appreciate" (God help us!) such ghastly garbage as "Hudibras" and "An Essay on Man"?

I doubt it, and so doubting it, I offer a hospitable claw to this Quaker City Taine, this jitney Matthew Arnold of that singularly moral town. He has done a necessary job with commendable diligence and thoroughness, and if it be urged against him that he reveals a total lack of humor in the doing of it, the ready answer is that a total lack of humor was the chief thing that it demanded. A man of livelier and more facile wit could not have pushed it through. He would have paused too often, in his dehorning and disemboweling of such ancient frauds as Dante, Bunyan and Thomas à Kempis, to spoof them, to laugh at them, to tickle them in the ribs, or, even more probably, to snicker at himself for engaging in so grandiloquent and gratuitous a piece of hocus-pocus. Dr. Mordell never snickers once. Nay, he does not even smile. From beginning to end he proceeds solemnly, gruesomely, in such horrific style as this:

"We cannot immediately (*sic*) resist thinking that a poet who teaches that the eating of an apple was the cause of the greatest misery that ever afflicted humanity has chosen a wretched and trite theme for a great poem." I can scarcely imagine a man more perfectly fitted for his work. He can give the simplest and most austere platitude—*e.g.*, "No character in Hell, human or diabolic, could think of amusement in playing a harp"—all the voluptuousness of a love-song by Ezra Pound and all the grim portentousness of a death sentence. Nature planned him for a Great Teacher, an American Thinker, an Uplifter. How his book will be hammered into all the prep school boys on that perhaps-not-distant day when the he-schoolmarm catch up to its heresies and so make articles of faith of them!

Let Dr. Mordell take the *Police Gazette* diamond belt. For lack of humor it would be extremely difficult to match him. But there is an ambitious young man in New York, Prof. B. Russell Herts by name, who may one day give him a very fair run for his money. Professor Herts' masterpiece, so far, is the discovery that Arnold Bennett "has not a great and mighty soul." You will find it embalmed on page 23 of his "DEPRECIATIONS" (*Boni*), a book of critical odds and ends, and of irritatingly uneven merit. On one page one finds such sweetmeats as this: "Abroad there is a variety of Social Classes. There are the dukes, marquises, barons, knights. Few of these labor and fewer possess capital. They are a true leisure class." And on another page, perhaps nearby, one finds certain observations of a considerable sagacity. Herts is at his best in the chapter entitled "Jottings in Europe." (The above quotation is not from it!) Here, for example, he states the whole case against Puritanism in a few words, and explains some of the late troubles of the English almost as accurately and as economically. He is at his worst when he discusses books and authors. He takes the cheap journalism of Bennett far too seriously;

he hails Shaw meaninglessly as "the greatest progressive in history"; he makes the capital mistake of considering George Moore as a prophet, instead of as an artist.

This last error, of course, is no more than a proof of Herts' nativity; a man may revile the Republic all he pleases, but so long as he breathes its air and is nourished by its proteids there will be some flavor of the Puritan in him, and he will show it by an unescapable tendency to convert æsthetic issues into ethical issues, to discuss beauty in terms of morals. No American may ever hope to get rid of that habit entirely, at least so long as he remains on this side of the water. The miasma is as potent as mother's milk. Even an American who is professedly anti-Puritan and eager to prove it—for example, Theodore Dreiser—shows constant signs of what may be called morality-consciousness. That is to say, he is constantly forced to assume that this or that human act, intrinsically inert morally, has some sort of moral content, or at all events to waste a lot of time proving that it hasn't, and to a jury already committed to the other side. My learned brother, George Jean Nathan, is another immoralist who is a good American under his false whiskers. His recent volume, "Another Book on the Theatre," is full of naïf moralizing; he is even indignant against chorus girls because many of them are, have been or hope to be kept ladies. I could cite from his work a score of specimens of moral sentiments that would be ratified without question by the Rev. Dr. Billy Sunday, Mr. Edward Bok or the Hon. Josephus Daniels. I myself have pious moments, and once denounced this same Dr. Sunday for sacrilege, a crime as purely mythical as seduction. . . . Therefore, I plead for executive clemency for Herts. Let him be paroled. And let him make amends by writing an essay on George Moore the stylist. That stylist Moore is one of the most delicate craftsmen of our time; only Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde have made lovelier music

of English prose. He stems, of course, not from Zola the moralist, as Herts, despite an attempt at differentiation, seems to suspect, but from Flaubert the artist. Moore is not "a gunshot at the conventions of this century"; if he were, Sudermann would be a salvo of Busy Berthas and Shaw would be a whole bombardment. He is not artillery at all: he is a lonely piper in a muggy London fog, playing a sweet, sad air from the childhood of the world. . . .

II

BETWEEN the death of Tom Robertson, in 1871, and the first performance of Pinero's "The Profligate," in 1889—approximately a whole theatrical generation, for very few of us do much theater-going before seventeen, and no man of any intelligence ever frequents the playhouses, at least to see plays, after thirty-five—the current English drama consisted almost entirely of stealings from the French. Those were the palmy days of Sydney Grundy and his fellow adapters and chloride-of-limesters; nothing could exceed the ardor with which they pounced upon each new French play that saw the light in Paris, and prepared it for burial in the Puritan cerebrum. The process was beautifully simple. Wherever the French dramatist wrote adultery, the English aseptician scratched it out and put in flirtation, and where, at the end, the Frenchman made the outraged husband kick his guilty wife out of villa, village and vilayet and then hurl himself homerically into the arms of the nearest soubrette, the moral Briton brought the two down to the footlights for a handshake, a general amnesty and an amiable buss. In brief, the French originals were anatomized of everything that made them honest, naughty and charming, and so served up to the enchanted Londoners like chorus girls encased in flour barrels. During the whole of the eighteen years England did not produce a single play of the first rank, or even, indeed, of the

tenth rank. Such a gaseous marshmallow as Henry Arthur Jones' "The Silver King" was actually the best that the country of Shakespeare and Sheridan, of Congreve and Wycherley, could produce of its own unaided effort. . . . And if the English drama of the time was thus a feeble imitation of the French, the American was a still feebler imitation of the English. Think, sweet one, of "Hazel Kirke"! Or of "The Young Mrs. Winthrop"!

Strangely enough, this so-copious borrowing from the French drama was accompanied by almost complete ignorance of it. That is to say, the London play-goers who, under the lash of Clement Scott, gave a lavish clapperclawing to the plays adapted—i.e., stolen and mutilated—from Augier, Labiche, Meilhac, Halévy and the younger Dumas, knew no more about the original pieces of these gentlemen than an Eskimo knows of Michaelmas. Until Brander Matthews' "French Dramatists" was published, in 1881, there was actually no intelligible notice of them, nor of any one of them, in the English language, and even after this book was printed there was a wait of ten years before such fellows as Walkley, Shaw and Archer returned to the subject, and began to throw genuine light upon it. Then came the Ibsen bomb-explosion, with its ensuing spy hunt in England, and the French papas of the English drama were once more neglected. This neglect has run down to our own time. It is only during the past year or two, and through the efforts of one man, Dr. Barrett H. Clark, that any systematic effort has been made to translate the principal French plays of the nineteenth century into English. Clark entered the field by way of Brioux's and Hervieu's echoings of Ibsen, but he soon found, it would appear, that Ibsen, too, had forerunners, and now he plunges among those forerunners with a long series of excellent translations from Labiche, Feuillet, Meilhac, Halévy and Pailleron (*French*), and with a sightly volume entitled "FOUR PLAYS FROM

THE FRENCH OF EMILE AUGIER" (Knopf).

The former already runs to twenty-five or thirty paper-bound volumes, and is to include specimens of the German, Russian, Spanish and Italian drama, and even a few plays from the Greek and Latin. Of the Russian drama we have had rather an overdose of late, and the more it is studied the more it is found to be soggy and witless, but there is plenty of room elsewhere for the enterprising pioneer, especially in France and Germany. Of the Sardou melodramas, for example, not three have been done into English; of the Labiche comedies not two; of the Dumas *filis* dramas of sex not one. Every American theater-goer has been thrilled at second-hand by Augier's "Le Mariage d'Olympe," for its grand scene (the belgianing of Olympe by the old marquis) was borrowed for Clyde Fitch's "The Marriage Game," but before Clark tackled it the actual text had never been done into English, nor was there any adequate critical discussion of its thesis and significance in the language, save in Dr. Matthews' forgotten book. Here is opportunity; here a useful job awaits the man. Two-thirds of what remains of Augier is almost as well worth translating, and two-thirds of Dumas *filis*, and probably a third of Sardou, and even some of Scribe, Feuillet, Meilhac, Dennery, Gondinet and Barrière. These birds taught our own theatrical canaries how to sing; they are the fathers of all our Thomases, Kleins, Walters, Sheldons, Armstrongs, Gillettes, Howards, Broadhursts and Megrues. More such sires are to be found across the Vosges; Clyde Fitch, for one, borrowed from the Germans even more than he borrowed from the French. It is to be hoped that Dr. Clark finds a German translator as discreet and efficient as he is himself. And think of Italy! How few of the new Italian plays have been Englished—the inane sardoodledoms of the mountebank, D'Annunzio; a single volume of Giacosa in the Modern Drama Series; and what else? And then there is Hun-

gary. We know a play or two of Molnár's, and one of Menyhért Lengyel's, but what of László Beöthy, Lajos Bíró, Sándor Bródy, Ferencz Herczeg, the Szász brothers, Rákosi-Malonyai, Viktor Tardos, Géza Gárdonyi, the enormously prolific Gergely Csiky? All of these are popular Hungarian dramatists, and most of them have been translated into German and the Slav languages. Again there are the Spaniards. We know only José Echegaray. Who will give us specimens of Jacinto Benavente, whose published plays run to eighteen volumes? Or of Fernando Periquet, the librettist of Enrique Granados, the Spanish composer? Or of Pérez Galdós, the Spanish Dumas? Or of such Portuguese dramatists as Fernando Caldeira, João de Camera, Camillo Castello Branco, the Marques de Costa, Francisco Serra, Gervasio Lobato, José de Souza Moneiro, Antonio Joaquim de Carvalho and Francisco Gomes de Amorim? Here is a chance for Dr. Clark and his bilingual bravos to do a good service.

As for Augier, his fame must rest upon the fact that, even before Ibsen, he made a gallant effort to put the actual facts of life into the drama. "Le Mariage d'Olympe" was not the first of the so-called problem plays, but it was the first of them to steer wholly clear of mush and rumble-bumble. Compare it, for example, with Dumas' "La Dame aux Camélias." In the latter, the one object of the dramatist is to manufacture a false and mawkish sympathy for a hussy who is plainly seen to deserve the boot in her very first scene. Indeed, Marguerite Gautier is made out to be so innocent and pathetic that three generations of fat women have snuffled and slobbered over her, and cursed God for not making them red-haired, tubercular and immoral. Against this hollow sentimentality "Le Mariage d'Olympe" hurls a rock that finds its mark. The piece shows the prostitute as she really is: a grafter in skirts, with no more conscience than a police captain and no

more real charm than a burlesque queen. . . . In closing, the *ordre pour la mérite* should be bestowed upon Mr. Knopf, who is a beginning publisher, for the attractive form that he has given to the Augier book. Inside and out it is a delight to the eye.

Of the other plays of the month, the only one worth noticing is George Middleton's "CRIMINALS" (*Huebsch*), a one-acter in which the dangers are seen of permitting a young girl to go to her marriage uninstructed in the appropriate facts of anatomy and physiology. Mr. Middleton is a competent workman and he has here made a plausible and actable little play, but his argument, after all, is chiefly of academic interest, for innocence is no longer a function of virginity. The sex hygienists have saved the flapper from her old ignorance, and she now goes to the altar with a learned and even cynical glitter in her eye. The veriest school-girl of to-day knows as much as the midwife of 1885. Worse, she spends a good deal more time discharging and disseminating her information. All this, of course, is highly embarrassing to the more romantic and ingenuous sort of men, of whom I have the honor to be one. We are constantly in the position of General Mitchener in Shaw's one-acter, "Press Cuttings," when he begs Mrs. Farrell, the talkative charwoman, to reserve her confidences for her medical adviser. One often wonders, indeed, what women now talk of to doctors. . . .

Please do not misunderstand me here. I do not object to this New Freedom on moral grounds, but on æsthetic grounds. In the relations between the sexes all beauty is founded upon romance, and all romance is founded upon ignorance, or, failing that, upon the deliberate denial of the known truth. To be in love is merely to be in a state of perceptual anesthesia—to mistake an ordinary young man for a Greek god or an ordinary young woman for a goddess. But how can this condition of mind survive the deadly matter-of-factness which sex hygiene and the new

science (or is it sport?) of eugenics impose? How can a woman continue to love a man after she has learned, perhaps by affidavit, that his hæmoglobin count is 117%, that his blood pressure is 122/79 and that his Wassermann reaction is satisfactorily negative? . . . Moreover, all this new-fangled "frankness" dams up one of the principal well-springs of art, to wit, impropriety. What is neither hidden nor forbidden is seldom very charming. If women, continuing their present tendency to its logical goal, end by going stark naked, there will be no more poets and painters, but only dermatologists and photographers. . . .

As I have said, the other current printed plays are anything but inspiring. Percy MacKaye's "THE IMMIGRANTS" (*Huebsch*) marks the final eclipse of MacKaye the poet by MacKaye the brummagem soothsayer and uplifter. Between the two of them, Harvard University and the Drama League have darn nigh ruind Percy. . . . The English version of Franz Adam Beyerlein's "Zapfenstreich" by Charles Swickard, under the title of "TAPS" (*Luce*), is frankly put forward to cajole the more extreme Germanophobes and anti-militarists. The piece was first heard of so long ago as 1901, and four years later it was played with some success in London and Paris, though it was a complete failure in New York. The author is an Austrian Socialist, and the play embodies the damning accusation that a German officer is disinclined to marry a sergeant's daughter, even after she has succumbed to his blandishments. This accusation was heartily applauded by the French, German, Austrian and Belgian Socialists, who now follow their hated officers into battle with patriotic cries, and gloriously butcher one another. . . .

III

I WISH I could give you a long list of lively and excellent novels, but the truth is that nearly all the new ones that have reached me have been intolerably stu-

pid. For example, Arnold Bennett's "THESE TWAIN" (*Doran*), the third (and, let us pray God, last) volume in the Clayhanger series. Most of us remember the joys of the first volume—and the keen disappointments of the second. Well, here is sorrow made doubly bitter. Bennett has simply filled 543 closely printed pages with empty and aimless details. One goes to sleep over it, dreams of dull sermons, awakens swearing, takes another hack at it, falls asleep again, awakens and tries it once more, and so on *ad infinitum*. It seems, in the end, no more than a vast effort to kill space, an enterprise infinitely huge and incredibly futile, a deafening howdy-do about nothing. Compared to it, Dreiser's "The 'Genius'" is a succinct and racy tale. . . . Turn now to Ian Hay's "SCALLY: THE STORY OF A PERFECT GENTLEMAN" (*Houghton*)—the usual sentimental story about a dog. Turn now to "SUNLIGHT PATCH," by Credo Harris (*Small-Maynard*)—the usual melodrama of the Kentucky uplands, with the usual uncut-diamond hero and the usual tedious dialect. And to "A DAUGHTER OF THE REVOLUTION," by Esther Singleton (*Moffat-Yard*), and to "THEN I'LL COME BACK TO YOU," by Larry Evans (*Ely*), and to "WINGS OF DANGER," by Arthur A. Nelson (*McBride*), and to "THE SON OF THE OTTER," by George van Schaick (*Small-Maynard*), and to "THE GLORY AND THE DREAM," by Anna Preston (*Huebsch*)—the usual sentimentality, the usual stale thrills, the usual hollow fustian, the usual stuff and nonsense of the 15-cent magazines. Nor can I find anything to excite and charm me in "THE FORTUNES OF GARIN," by Mary Johnston (*Houghton-Mifflin*), an historical novel printed twenty years after its time, nor in Maurice Hewlett's "THE LITTLE ILIAD" (*Lippincott*), nor in "MOYLE CHURCH-TOWN," by John Trevena (*Knopf*), nor in "THE ROSE OF YOUTH," by Elinor Mordaunt (*Lane*). All of these books show good workmanship; all of them avoid the cheapness just mentioned; but not one

of them, I venture, will be alive two years hence; not one of them is of much more importance to beautiful letters than to day's newspaper.

Ehue! what bad novels the publishers print! What a futile business to read them—with "Huckleberry Finn" on the shelf, and "Germinal," and "What Maisie Knew" and "Barry Lyndon"! Even when one is intrigued by a good beginning, it almost invariably leads to a banal and irritating ending. I dip, for example, into "WESBLOCK," by Harry McDonald Walters (*Dent*), and am quickly interested by the autobiographical hero's account of his non-age. But on page 85 I am bludgeoned by such stuff as this:

People are just like foods; if you have too much of them, they pall on you.

There is only one way to love a woman, and that is to love her faults and all.

And on page 111 I am murdered in cold blood by this:

I would rather have ten people remember me as "dear old Wesblock" than have a million remember me by the amount of money I left behind me.

So with Will Levington Comfort's "LOT & COMPANY" (*Doran*). The book starts out briskly, but soon shunts off into Comfort's characteristic mysticism. I confess frankly to a violent (and perhaps grossly unjust) prejudice against his whole menagerie of Mesiahs, Voices, Unifiers, Gleams, Far-away Women and such-like fabulous fowl. He writes skilfully always, and sometimes beautifully, but I am quite unable to stomach his theology. . . .

IV

LET overpraise pursue him a year or two more, and Irvin S. Cobb will be so thrust through the vitals that he will never recover. His friends do him an ill service to compare him absurdly to Mark Twain and Poe; his publishers perform a thwack upon his caput when they tout his latest composition, "SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS" (*Doran*) as "the funniest book yet written by

Irvin S. Cobb" and "the funniest book we know of." Snout within, one finds half a dozen genuinely clever and amusing observations hitched to 60-odd pages of ancient vaudeville patter and funny-column wheezes—e.g., the wheeze to the effect that in the days of the author's childhood "germs had not been invented yet" (page 17), the wheeze to the effect that doctors bury their mistakes (page 49), and the wheeze to the effect that the old-time doctor always prescribed medicines of abominably evil taste (page 54). Such humor, to be sure, has its place, but it is surely ridiculous to argue that it belongs to literature. What it actually does belong to is Dr. Ayers' Almanac.

V

DESPITE the war, with its blest reduction of all forms of the uplift to absurdity, the manufacture and marketing of "inspirational" books continues unabated in our fair confederation. Thus Prof. Seymour Deming, in "THE PILAR OF SALT" (*Small-Maynard*), calls upon all college boys to join the revolution, whatever that may be, and Dr. Van Wyck Brooks, in "AMERICA'S COMING-OF-AGE" (*Huebsch*), instructs the rest of us in our opportunities in the manner of the *New Republic*. I see many more such hortatory and pontifical books: "NOTES ON RELIGION," by John Jay Chapman (*Gomme*); "THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE," by Horace Holley (*Gomme*); "THE STORY OF CANADA BLACKIE," by Anne P. L. Field (*Dutton*); "THE NEARING CASE," by Dr. Lightner Witmer (*Huebsch*). . . . I turn from these pale blossoms of the uplift to the gorgeous rose-garden of Lord Dunsany—to the incomparable fantasies of his "BOOK OF WONDER" (*Luce*), and the exquisite miniatures of his "FIFTY-ONE TALES" (*Kennerley*). Dunsany doesn't give a hoot for the uplift; he is not a forward-looker. He is something infinitely better; he is something immeasurably more valuable than all the forward-lookers at present unhung; he is a first-rate artist. . . .



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THE first of every New Year always seems to usher in a particularly cold spell of weather to provide a pretext for doing the usual fashionable thing, and going in search of somewhere warmer. To a great many of us this had come to mean Europe, but the war has so limited our selection of foreign resorts and the trip across the Atlantic has become such a risky adventure that this season the South and West will no doubt see a good many of those who generally spend the winter in the Riviera or Southern France.

As a consequence, most of the clothes that otherwise would be obtained in Paris en route will have to be bought on Fifth Avenue, and it is a consolation to find that the shops have profited by their last year's experience and anticipated this. For the mornings and afternoons there are hundreds of new things in the way of simple white

clothes and sport costumes, and amongst the showings of evening gowns—always the principal factor in any sort of a wardrobe—there are any

amount of new models that come up to the French standard without being outrageously high in price.



NEW EVENING
GOWNS

One of these is shown on this page, and although the employment of metal cloth and the skirts arranged to stand out at the hem make it the last cry in fashions, the price is only ninety-five dollars. The foundation is of silver cloth, cut on fairly closely fitting lines to shine through the blue tulle, and give the figure a slender, graceful effect in spite of the fullness

of the overskirts. The lower one of these overskirts falls straight to the hem, edged with a narrow piping of silver cloth, and the upper one, which is much fuller, is cut in four very long

points which are turned under and attached to the skirts of tulle and silver cloth by large oval buckles of blue and white rhinestones. This arrangement gives the skirt a bouffancy it would not otherwise have and the rhinestones shining through one layer of tulle are much more effective than if they were placed on the outside. In the bodice, there is a repetition of the skirt treatment, the silver cloth being overlaid with the tulle, which falls in long points, held at the shoulders by rhinestone buckles. This gown looked extremely striking on a blonde model, but no doubt its vivid colouring and the sparkling buckles near the face would make it becoming to most women. Taking into consideration that it is intended for the most formal occasions, it was not at all expensive, but for the hundred and one little evening affairs which form part of the winter season in the South—card parties, informal dances and the rest—there were other gowns much lower in price. One dancing frock composed entirely of cream-coloured net and trimmed with pale pink rosebuds cost twenty-five dollars. It was cut on simple lines to be suitable for a girl or a young-looking woman, and the skirt was plaited to render it less transparent. There were any number, too, of the usual pale-coloured chiffon and crêpe de Chine dresses, ranging in price upwards from twenty dollars.

A SKIRT FOR THE SOUTH

After the consideration of evening gowns for a Southern wardrobe comes that of sport clothes. In Florida last year, a well-cut washable skirt and a few attractive sweaters were made to do service for all sorts of occasions,

and from all indications the same is going to be true this year, with a few changes in the articles themselves. A white cotton skirt, of course, is generally only that and nothing more, but there are really one or two new models this year, and they are all very wide around the hem. The one in the illustration measures nearly three yards at the bottom. It is of cotton gabardine, fastened all the way down the front with pearl buttons, and there are two pockets deep enough for practical use, in spite of the fancy effect of two odd revers on the sides. The price of this skirt was \$4.90.

SWEATER STYLES

The most noticeable change in sweater styles this year is that, in the place of the startlingly vivid oranges and greens which have been popular for so long, are a number of new pastel shades. These look a little less like strictly sporting clothes, and are not nearly so trying to complexions that fall short of perfection. Another change is the tendency to follow the new coat lines, and to flare at the bottom, instead of fitting closely to the hips. The sweater in

the illustration has a band of moleskin at the bottom to accentuate this fullness, and another band at the collar, which is cut on new lines, to button high in the neck, or to lie flat on the shoulders. Though the collar would be a protection for the throat on those chilly days which come even to Florida, the moleskin is really intended to form only an ornamentation. Mauve and white silk composed the sweater and the very long fringed girdle at the waist. The price was \$48.50—a really good silk sweater is always expensive—but there were others in soft wool



and fibre silk which embodied the same new ideas and cost anywhere from five dollars up.

SPORT SHOES AND STOCKINGS

Some new sport shoes are the Scotch brogue, shown in the same illustration. The counter is of sole leather, and is placed on the outside to prevent a possible chafing of the heel from continuous exercise. The long fringed tongue is an attractive touch and has the merit of making the foot look smaller and less clumsy than is the general rule in sport shoes. These were \$9.00. The stockings shown with them are also Scotch, not only in name but in manufacture. They are reminiscent of the short wool stockings of the Scotch Highlanders, but where the originals were green, with squares done in red, these are white, with a design in brown. The wool, too, is of course much finer, to make them suitable for feminine wear. They were seen in an uptown shop which deals exclusively in hosiery, and cost \$5.00 a pair.

TWO NEW HATS

Hats for Palm Beach wear this year depart from the tiny styles of the winter to become broad and floppy enough to be a protection from the sun and a preventive of possible freckles. The one shown in the illustration goes even farther than this, and has a lining of green silk, to form a rest for the eyes

after the glare of the white sand. Despite its practicality, however, it is of a very becoming shape, and the soft mauve hemp of which it is formed is ornamental enough to make the scant trimming of narrow green ribbon and pearl buckles on the crown almost unnecessary. An exception to prove the rule of large hats for Palm Beach is shown on second page following. This, in a large millinery shop on the Avenue, is called

the Odette model. It is of dark brown Milan with a trimming of old blue ribbon, and a rose formed of brown beads.

THE WHITE SALES

One of the chief consolations of having to remain in town during the winter season is the fact that the white sales take place in January and make

it possible to buy table linen and lingerie at a much lower price than would be possible for the rest of the year. Table linen at considerably reduced prices is especially welcome after the ravages made by Christmas entertaining, and good lingerie, of course, is welcome at any time. A really inexpensive night-dress is shown on this page. It is of pink mull, with an unusual bolero effect at the shoulders. The front is shirred and the edges are all finished with hemstitching. The price is only \$1.10, and an envelope chemise to match this costs \$1.95. Another pretty night-dress that was extremely low in price is also illustrated. It is of white batiste,

(Continued on second page following)

